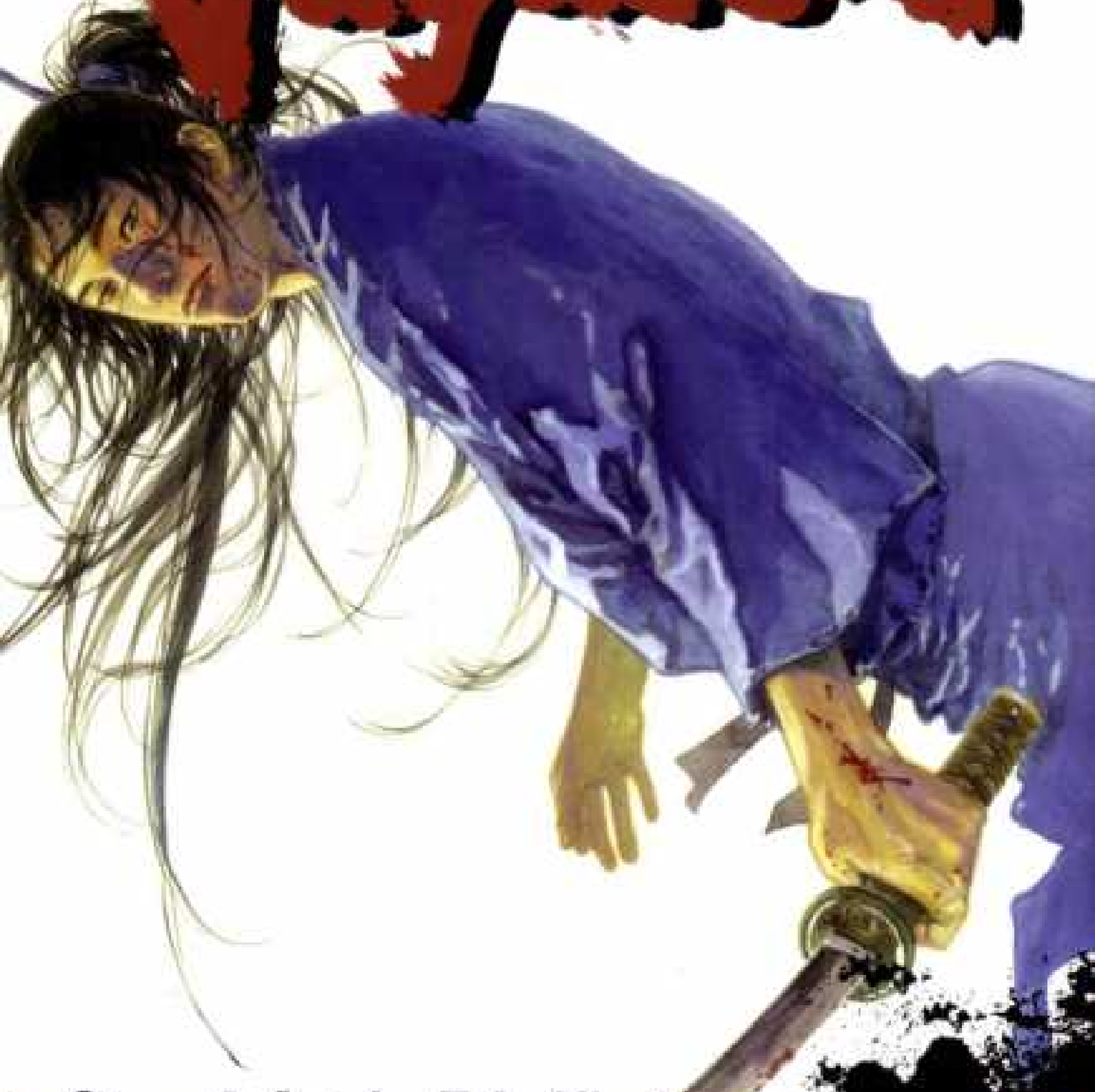
editor's choice

Vagabond



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based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 17

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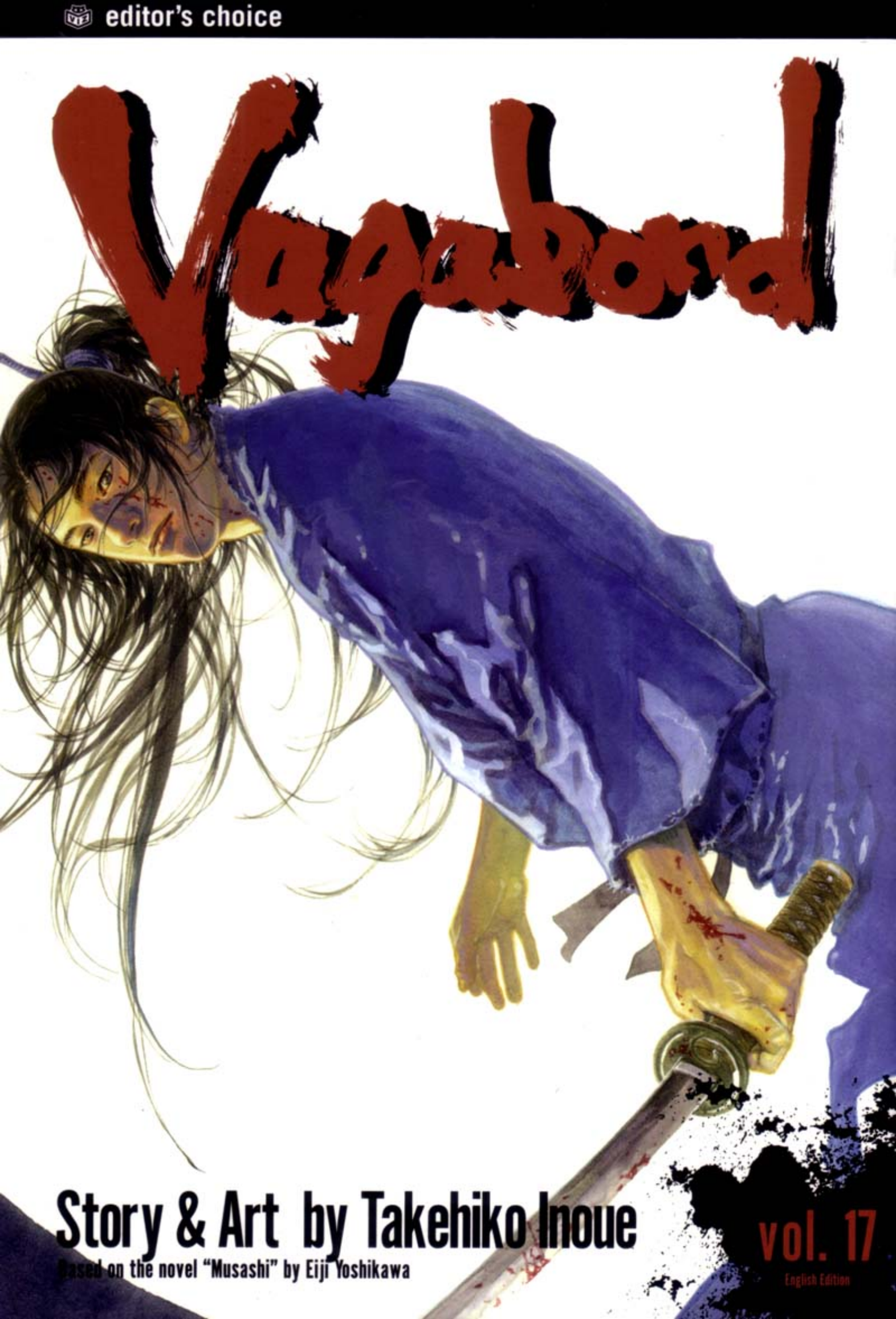
Vagabond



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Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 17

English Edition

Vagabond Vol. 17

Story & Art by
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Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

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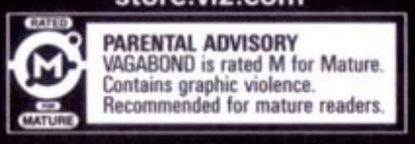
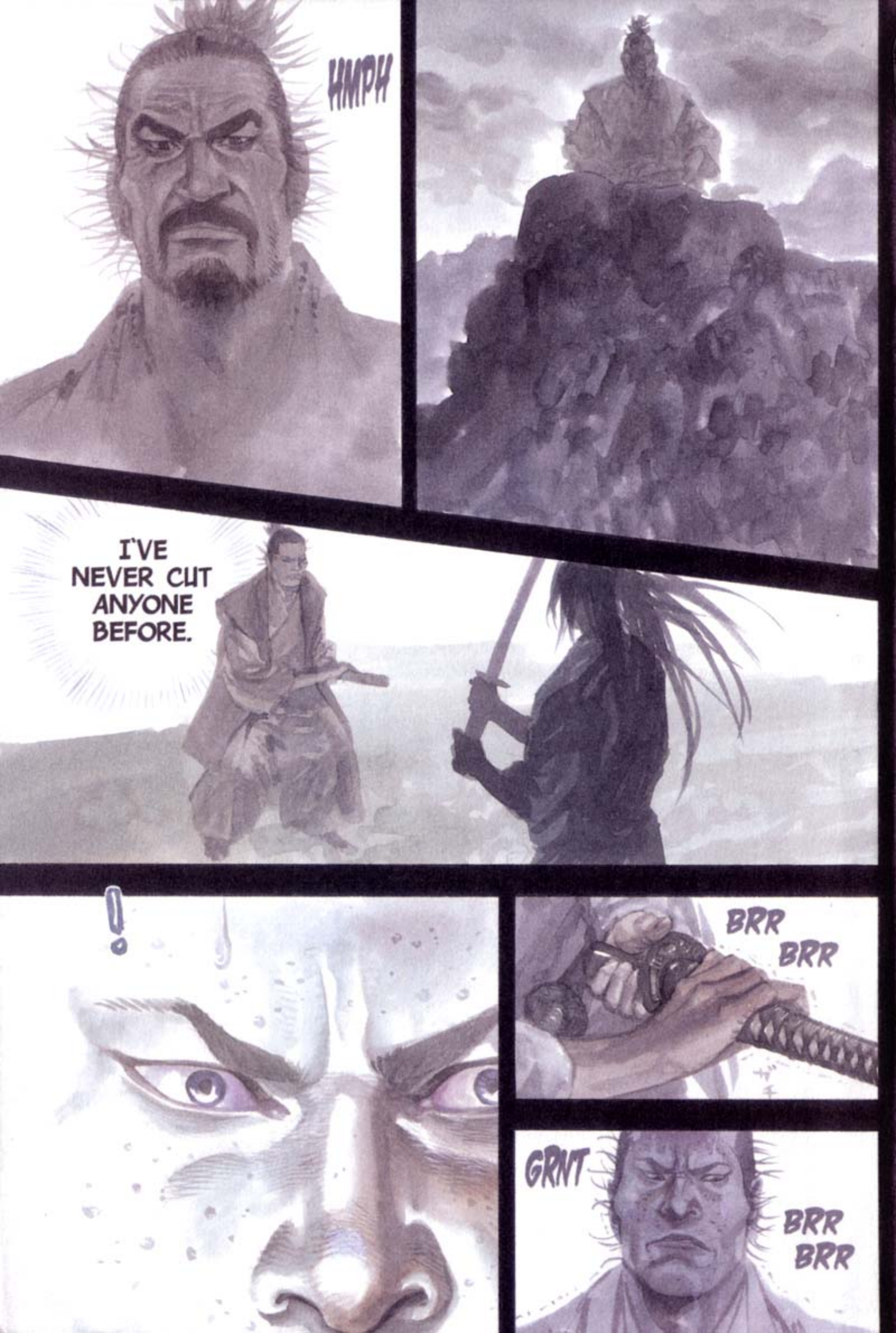
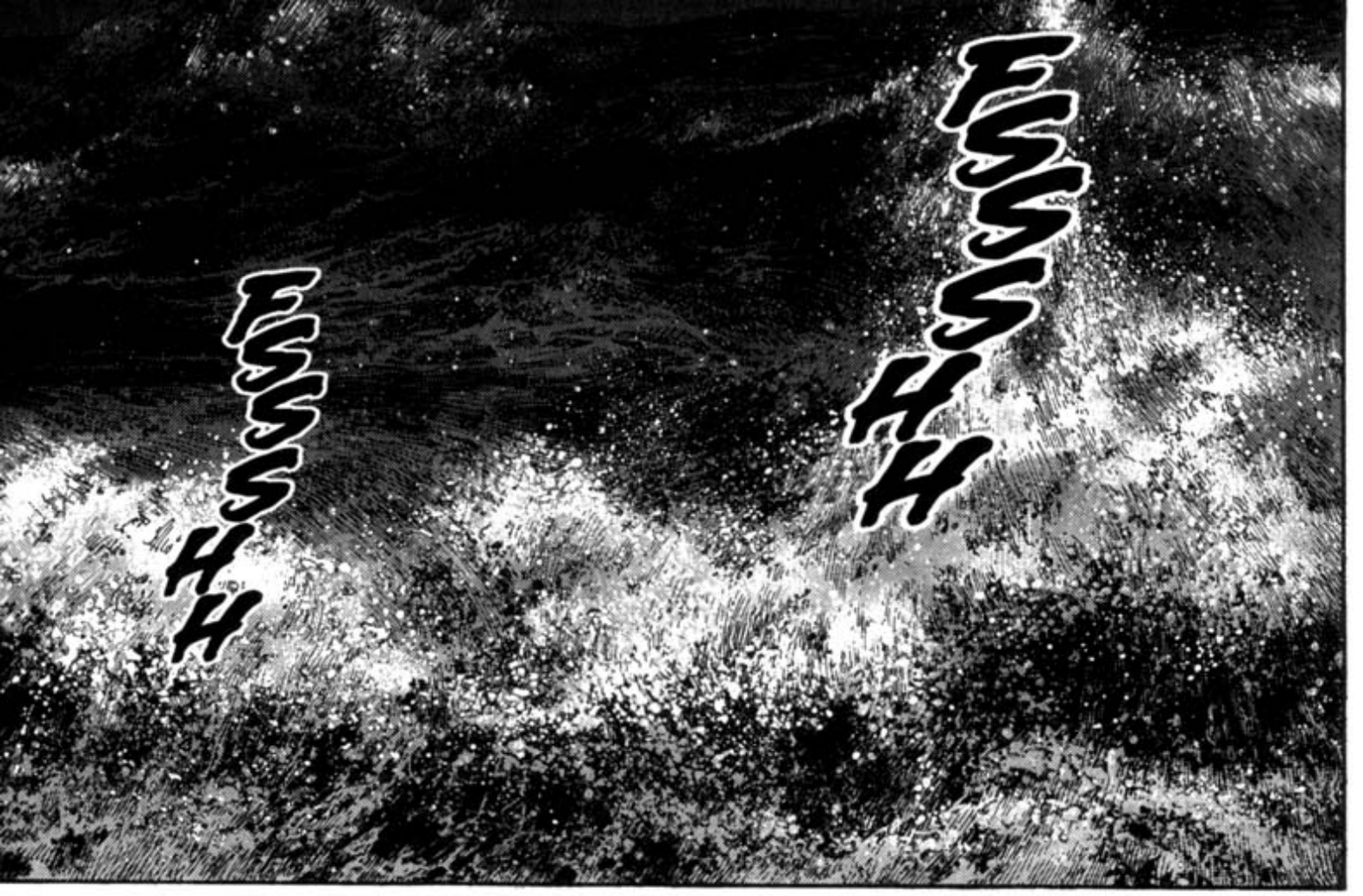



HMPH
I'VE NEVER CUT ANYONE BEFORE.
!
BRR BRR
GRNT
BRR BRR

#151
Numb
Vagabond
VOL. 17
Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue
Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

WAIT...
HEY...
YOU'RE TOO DETACHED, KOJIRŌ!!


FSSSHH
FSSSHH

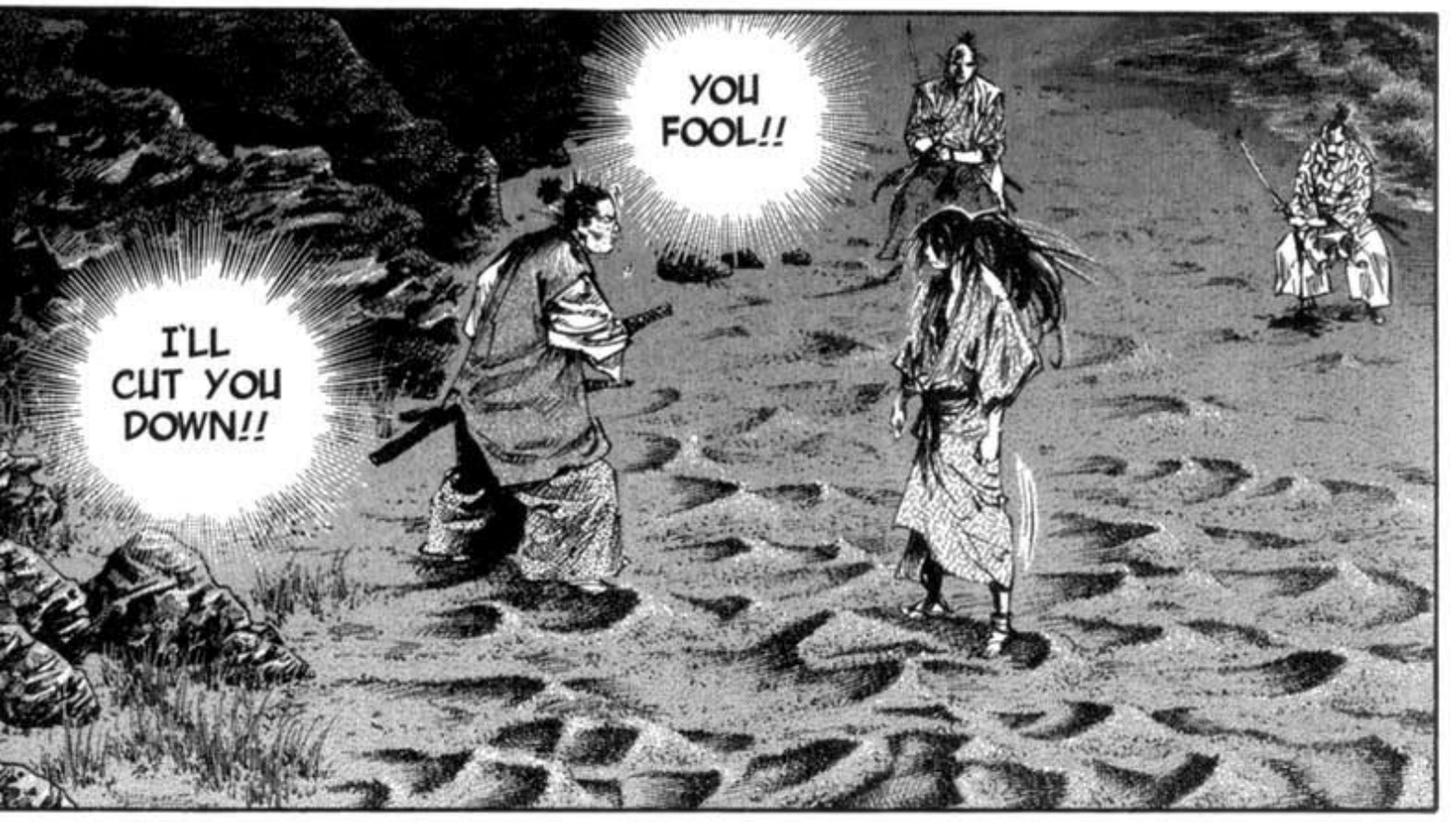
YOU'RE GOING TO TRY TO CUT ME DOWN WITH *THAT* LOOK IN YOUR EYES?!

WAIT!! HOW CAN YOU DO THIS...?
THMP THMP
THMP THMP

...AT LEAST SOME KIND OF EMOTION.
...YOU SHOULD FEEL RAGE OR HATRED ...
WHEN YOU KILL SOMEONE ...

OR EVEN ZEAL.
SELF-DOUBT...
.....
BUT CURIOSITY ...?
ONLY CURIOSITY ?!

WHUD
FIP


YOU FOOL!!
I'LL CUT YOU DOWN!!

...!!
BRR
BRR
BRR
FICH
FICH

!
CUT HIM.
CUT HIM!
CUT HIM DOWN !!
SSHK

UNGH...
U--
UEDA
...

!!
FOOSH

TMP
GASP!

SHUK
AHH!!

AH...
UH...
UHH!
WHO IS THIS BOY?!
ITTŌSAI ...
!?
UHH
AH...

MY JUNIOR-- A FELLOW DISCIPLE!!
FICH
HUF
HUF
FICH
!

I AM GRATE-FUL...
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

ANY LAST WORDS?
NO...I HAVE NO FAMILY.
I HAVE NO WORDS TO LEAVE BEHIND.

FSSSHH
HMM ...
A SAD END.
HUF
HUF
HUF

THUNK
FSSSSHH
FSSSSHH

FICH

THOK
AHH
THOK

FICH
FICH
FSSH
SWOOSH
FSSSHH

NOW ARE YOU AFRAID?
UMF
AHH
FSSSHH
NOW...
...YOU...
...ARE...
...AFRAID ?

AHH!!
THUNK
TUGG
GAHH!!
FSSSSHH

BRR
BRR
BRR
THUNK
REMEMBER THIS.
RRIP

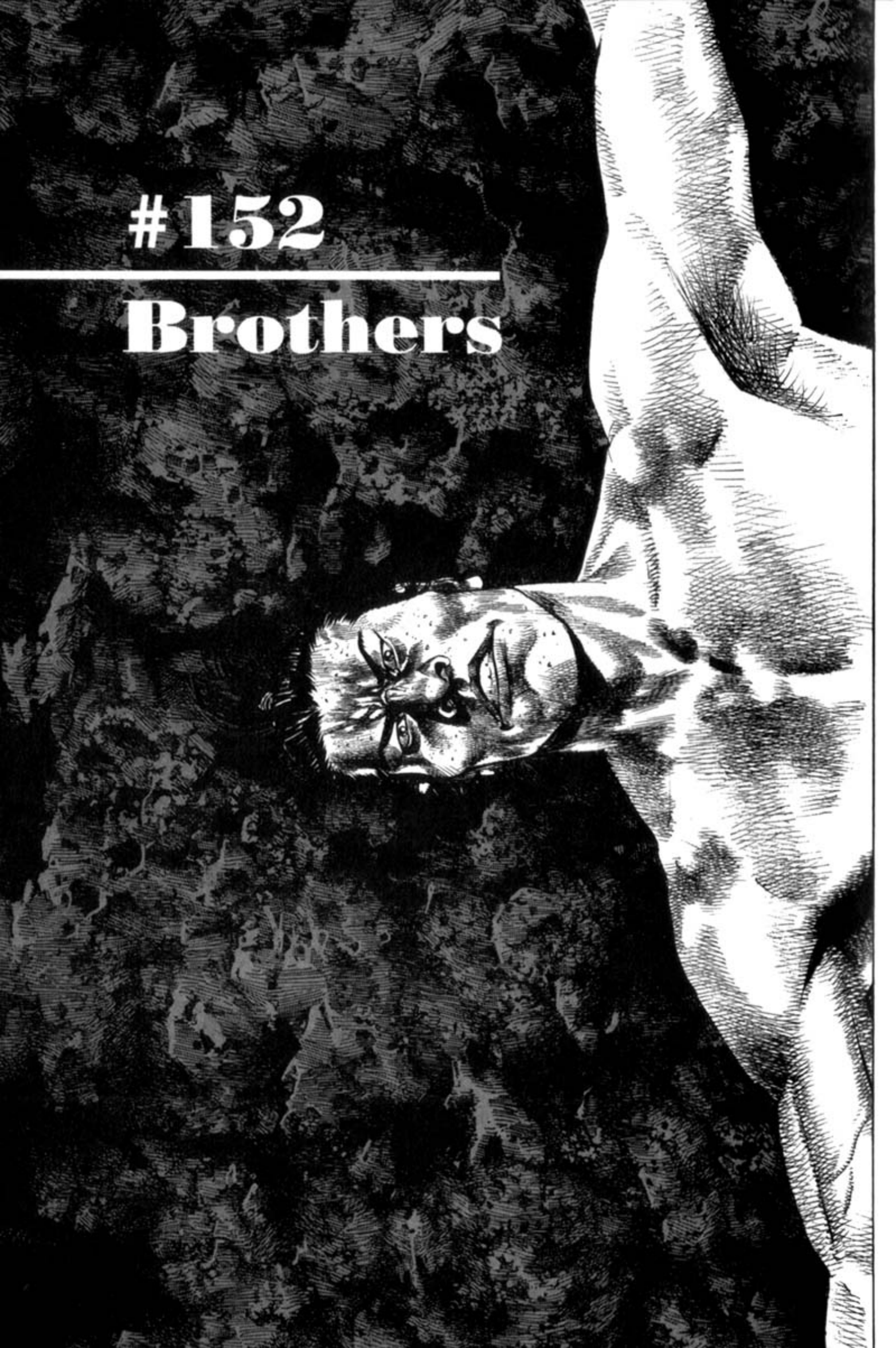
THOSE WHO ARE NUMB AGAINST FEAR ARE THE FIRST TO DIE.

NOW THAT YOU UNDERSTAND, GO AND FIGHT!!
FSSSHH
!

TUGG

Vagabond

(DO...)
(...GET...)
(...YOU...)
(...IT?)


#152
Brothers

FSSSHH
FSSSHH
THMP THMP
A FELLOW DISCIPLE ...?!
THMP THMP
FIP
FIP
HUF
HUF
AHH...
THAT'S PREPOSTEROUS!! HOW COULD HE DO THAT?!
HE DIDN'T HAVE THE SLIGHTEST COMPUNCTION AGAINST STABBING HIS JUNIOR!!

FSSSHH
HOW COULD THEY BE FELLOW DISCIPLES ?!

MASTER KEMPŌ!!

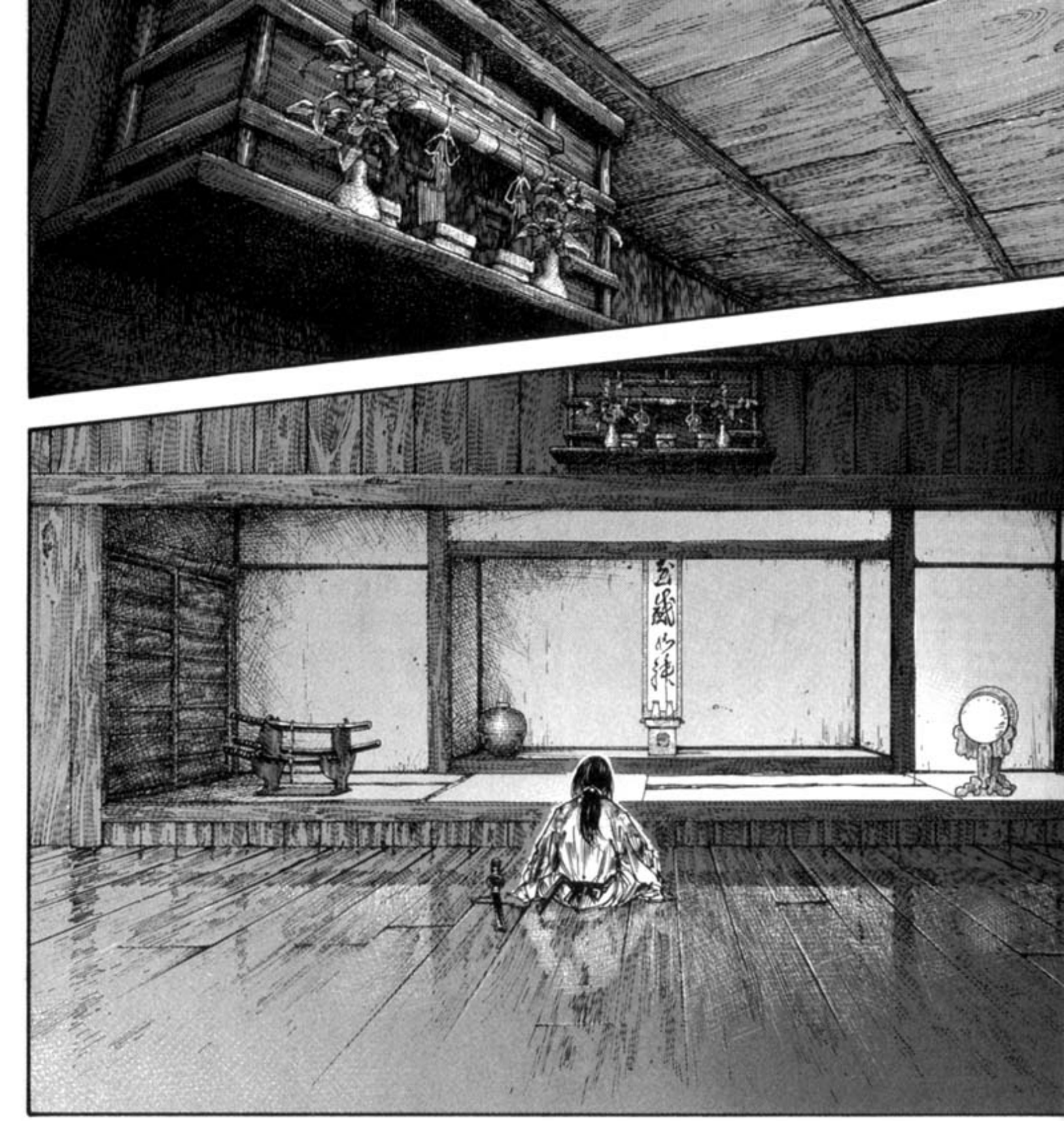
.....

FATHER ...!!

MY OLDER BROTHER ...

SNIF ...
UR...
SNIF ...
SIR...

WHY, FATHER ?!
MY BROTHER HAS LOST HIS PASSION FOR THE SWORD.
HE HAS NO DESIRE TO TRAIN !!
I HUNGER FOR IT!!
FATHER...
WHERE IS MY BROTHER DURING THIS CRISIS?!
WHY DID YOU BEQUEATH THE SCHOOL TO HIM?



NOW I HAVE NO ONE TO REBEL AGAINST.
FATHER, HOW COULD YOU...?
GLUG GLUG GLUG
HOW COULD YOU DIE ON US?
GLUG

WHY DID YOU MAKE ME THE HEAD OF THE SCHOOL?
I CAN'T REBEL AGAINST YOUR FINAL DESIRE...
THE ALCOHOL'S HAVING NO EFFECT...
WHEW
FIP

FWOOSH

THUMP
HMPH
I MUST SET OUT ON A JOURNEY.
THUMP
YAH!
NNGH!
THUMP
WHAT IS IT THAT HE HAS THAT I DON'T ?
I MUST DISCOVER WHERE I AM LACKING.

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
A PILGRIMAGE OF TRAINING...
.....
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF
HUF
I MUST DISCOVER WHAT IT IS I LACK...
HYUU
YOU'RE BLEEDING REALLY BAD! YOU CAN'T FIGHT!
AHH...
HUF
HUF
HUF
STAND DOWN!!
STAND DOWN!!
NNGH
PLIP
PLIP

DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME? STAND DOWN!!
ぶふ
HYUU...
FWISH
!
FWISH

AHH!
HA HA!! I THOUGHT YOU'D RUN OFF IN TEARS...
...BUT YOU'RE HAVING TOO MUCH FUN, EH?!
YOU'RE STILL JUST A CHILD...
KOJIRŌ !!
YOU'RE ENJOYING THIS GAME...
AREN'T YOU?!

FINISH
.....
WHAT IS IT I LACK...?
HUF
HUF
HUF

GUTS
...
TMP
DEN...
FICH

AII
EE
HE'S FAST !
THAT WAS CLOSE ...

COURAGE...
WHAT IS IT I LACK?
BRR
HUF
BRR
BRR
HUF
HUF
AGH!!
FSSSHH
PLISH
FIZZ
AIEE
IGH!...
DETERMINA-TION...

AHH
FICH
HYUU
HUF
HUF
HYUU
AHA, I SEE...
YOU'RE NOW AWARE OF THE FEAR THAT COMES FROM FIGHTING...
BUT YOU'RE STILL NOT AFRAID OF HIM!
YOU'RE ONLY...
...CURIOUS ?
HUF
HUF

FSSSHH
HUF
HUF
HUF
FSSSHH

DON'T TURN BACK.
DEN...

DON'T LOOK FOR A WAY OUT.

BRR
I WANT TO RISE ABOVE...
BRR
BRR

DON'T THINK ABOUT HIS INJURY.
DON'T GET DISTRACTED.
YOU MUST SUPPRESS YOUR KINDNESS !!
!
SHLP
!
AHH...
!!
DEN!
SEIJŪRŌ WOULD AIM FOR THAT LEG!!
I'M THE SON...
BRR
NO...
BRR
HUF
I'M...
NO...
BRR
HUF
HUF
BRR
FSSSHH
FSSSHH
HUF
HUF
!
DON'T SAY IT!

I'M THE SON OF YOSHIOKA KEMPŌ!!
THIS FELLA'S DEAF.
AND HE'S GOT NO IDEA WHO KEMPŌ IS.
TOO BAD, EH...?
HUF
HUF
HEY, KID...

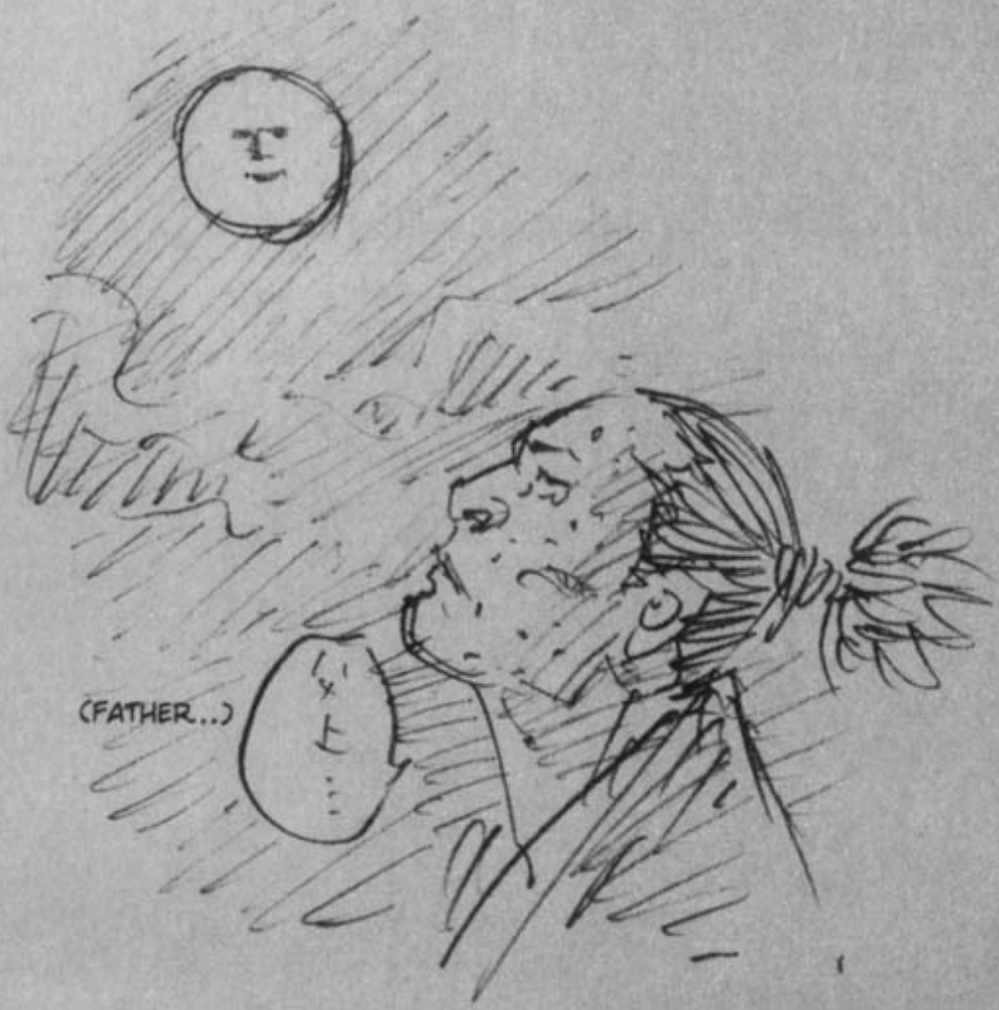
I HAVE...
FSSSHH
...NOTHING.
BRR
...INSIST ON FIGHTING EVEN WHEN YOU'RE MAIMED?
WHY DO YOU...
BRR
BRR
BRR
BRR
BRR
BRR
FSSSHH
HUF
HUF
HUF
I CAN'T FIGHT YOU LIKE THIS.
NNGH ...

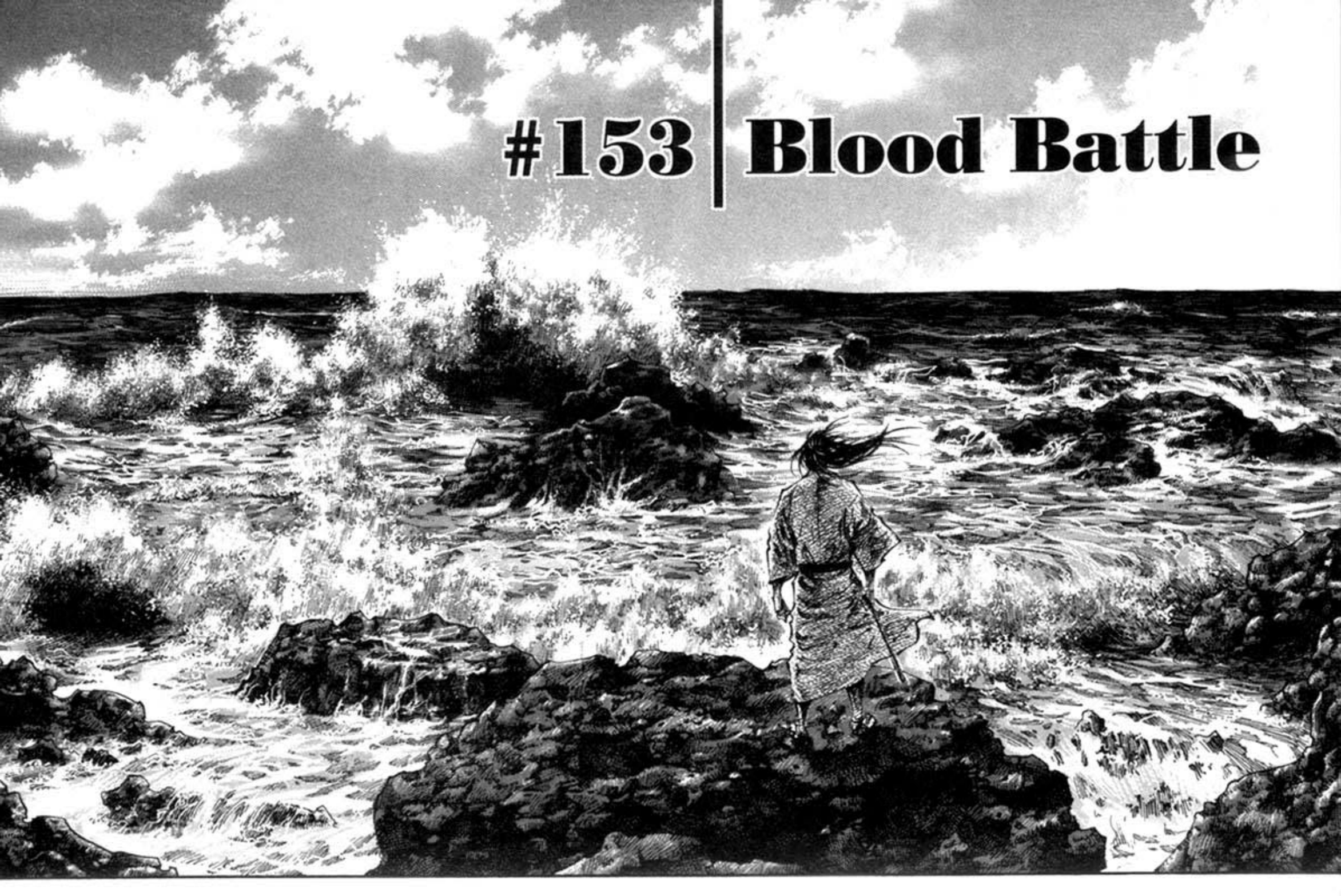
THUNK
FATHER...
YOU NEVER OFFERED ME A WORD OF PRAISE...
AHHH!
AHHH!
AHHH!
URGH!

I WANT TO RISE ABOVE...
...MY BROTHER.

THERE'S ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE OUT THERE, EH, KOJIRŌ?
HMM...

Vagabond


(FATHER...)


#153 Blood Battle

うがあああ
ARGH
うが
UGAH
UGAH...
ARR...
GAHH...
ARR...

PAIN...
ZING
HUF
HUF
TUGG
TUGG
TUGG

HYUUU
HUF
HUF
THROB
THROB
AHH
...
NNGH
HUF
HUF
HUF
NNGH

.....
.....
HOW FOOLISH ...!!

WHY DELIBERATELY LOSE YOUR ADVANTAGE?
HUF
HUF
HOW INCREDIBLY NAIVE...!!
HE WANTS TO MAKE IT AN EVEN MATCH?
HUF
HUF
WHAT A FOOL.
THIS IS DIFFERENT FROM TRAINING IN A DOJO.
YOSHIOKA HAS NO FUTURE, UEDA!!
HUF
HUF
HE'S WRONG.
DEN-SHICHIRŌ NEVER HAD AN ADVANTAGE.
NO...

BY HURTING HIMSELF HE'S FINALLY FREED HIMSELF.
NO MATTER HOW TOUGH HE ACTS, DEN JUST CAN'T HURT ANYONE.
THE KILLER'S INSTINCT.
SEIJŪRŌ HAS IT, BUT DENSHICHIRŌ DOES NOT.
RUTH-LESS-NESS.
...TO ROUSE THAT INSTINCT FROM DEEP WITHIN.
HE STABBED HIMSELF...

I'M CUTTING YOU DOWN.
HUF
HUF
HUF

SHASHA SHAH!
SHAH!

GAH!
FWOOSH

FWOOSH
WHUP
SPLSH

FWOOSH
TOK
TINK
!

THOK
TUNK

SLISH
!!
...
FICH
FICH
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
FICH

HUF
HUF
HUF
THROB
THROB
THROB
THROB
HIS OPPONENT IS USING THE SHORT SWORD.
AHA!! DEN-SHICHIRŌ DOES HAVE AN AD-VANTAGE.
DENSHICHIRŌ HAS THE ADVANTAGE OF REACH.
FUUUHH
IT'S BECAUSE YOU ONLY TRAIN WITH A STICK.
.....
THIS IS PATHETIC.
IF YOU DON'T HANDLE THE SWORD AS AN EDGED WEAPON...
...THIS MATCH WILL NEVER END, KOJIRŌ!!

GLARE
HUF
HUF
HUF
HISSSSSH
WHOOSH
WHOOSH
FWICH

ぶふ
HYUU...
WHY ARE YOU SMILING ?
FSSSHH

SLISH

HMM... GOOD INSTINCTS.
DEN...

!
HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF
WHY ARE YOU SMILING?

HUF
HUF
HUF

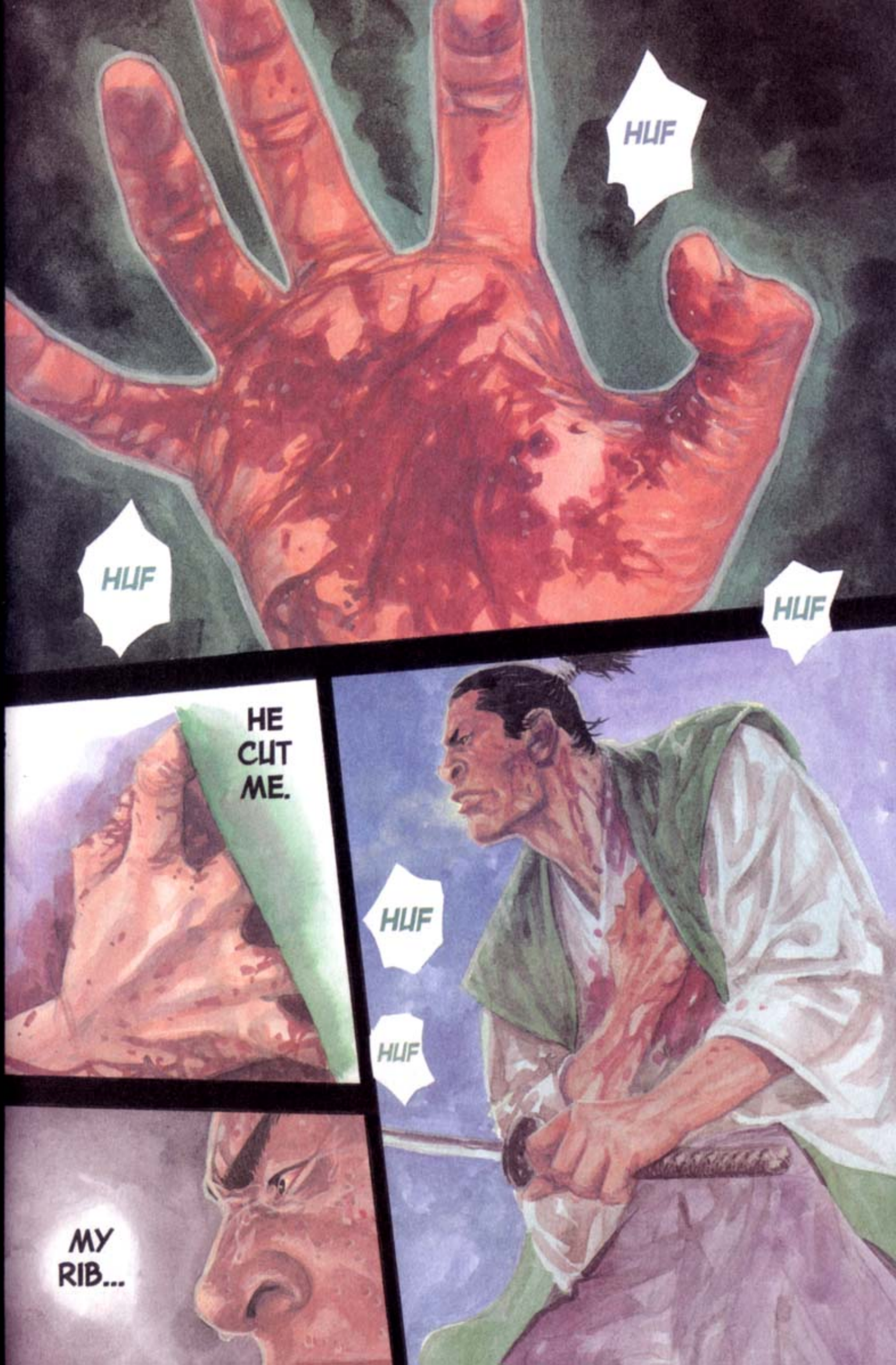
YOU LIKE FIGHTING, DO YOU?!
HUF
HUF
HUF

Vagabond

(SMIRK)

HUF
HUF
YOU SMILE BECAUSE...
HUF
HUF
HUF
...YOU LIKE TO FIGHT.

#154 Shore of Blood


HUF
HUF
HUF
HE CUT ME.
HUF
HUF
MY RIB...

HUF
HUF
MY RIB BONE SAVED MY LIFE...!!
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
THE WOUND IS SHALLOW.
HIS SWORD IS SHORT.
I MUST HAVE BEEN REALLY DISTRESSED.
HUF
HUF
RIDI-CULOUS.
I SHOULD HAVE NOTICED SOONER ...
MY SHORT SWORD.
HE'S USING A SHORT SWORD.

I'M STILL LACKING IN EXPERIENCE !!
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
FSSSHH

ONE SWING OF THE SWORD.
HUF
HUF
HUF

I'M GOING TO CUT YOU DOWN, KOJIRŌ.
HUF
HUF
THAT'S THE YOSHIOKA STYLE.
I'LL PUT MY LIFE BEHIND IT...
ONE SWING...
YOU'LL BE MY FIRST KILL!!
SHA SHA SHAH!

WHAT WAS THAT SOUND?
!

NO, WAS IT HUMAN ?!
HUF
HUF
HUF
A BEAST...

FICH
!

SNIF SNIF

KOJIRŌ !!
HUF
HUF
HUF
KOJIRŌ ...

FSH
FSH
FSH
THE SMELL OF BLOOD.

KOJIRŌ!!

HUF

HUF
HUF

WHAT ARE YOU DOING ...?
OH, KOJIRŌ ...!

ZHAH!

HMM...
AGAH
DEN!!
...THEN THE NEXT ONE WILL FINISH HIM OFF...
HYUU
IF THAT SWING DIDN'T DO IT...

KLANG
ZHAH

GAH
HYUU
HUF
HYUU
IF SEIJURO IS LIKE A CLOUD IN THE SKY...
ONE CAN NEVER UNDER-ESTIMATE THE POWER OF PASSION.

THEN DEN IS A TREE.
HE'S FIRMLY ROOTED IN THE EARTH WITH THE POTENTIAL TO TOWER UP HIGH...
MASTER KEMPŌ, FOR THE FIRST TIME I CONTEST ONE OF YOUR DECISIONS.
DEN-SHICHIRŌ IS THE RIGHTFUL MASTER OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.
HUF
HUF
WITH MY NEXT SWING...
HUF
HUF
HUF

I'M TREMBLING WITH EXCITE-MENT!
HUF
BRR
BRR
HUF
I WANT TO BECOME STRONG.
STRONGER ...
HUF
FWOM
I'M GLAD I WAS BORN INTO A SAMURAI FAMILY.
!

I'VE LOST TOO MUCH BLOOD!
HUF
HUF
HE'S IN THE SAME CONDITION.
NO...
HUF
HUF
HUF
THIS WILL MAKE DEN-SHICHIRŌ STRONGER ...
THE NEXT SWING WILL DECIDE IT...
...IF HE SURVIVES.

AHH...
UUH...
HMM?
AHHH...
UUH...
AHH...
AHH...

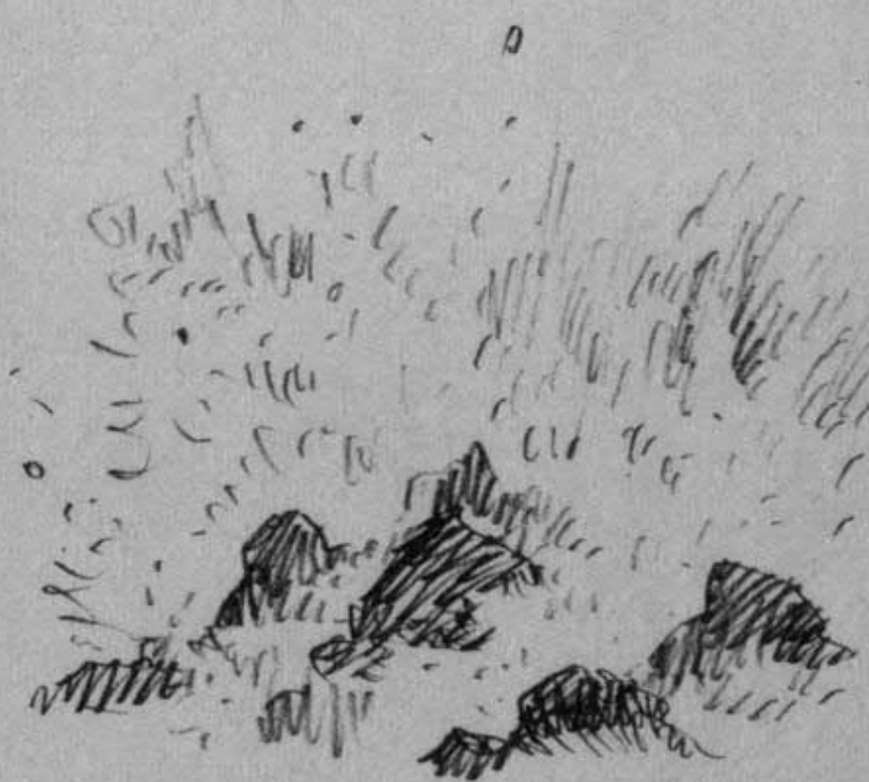
IS HE SINGING ...?
EVEN THOUGH HE'S DEAF?
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
...?
HUF
HUF

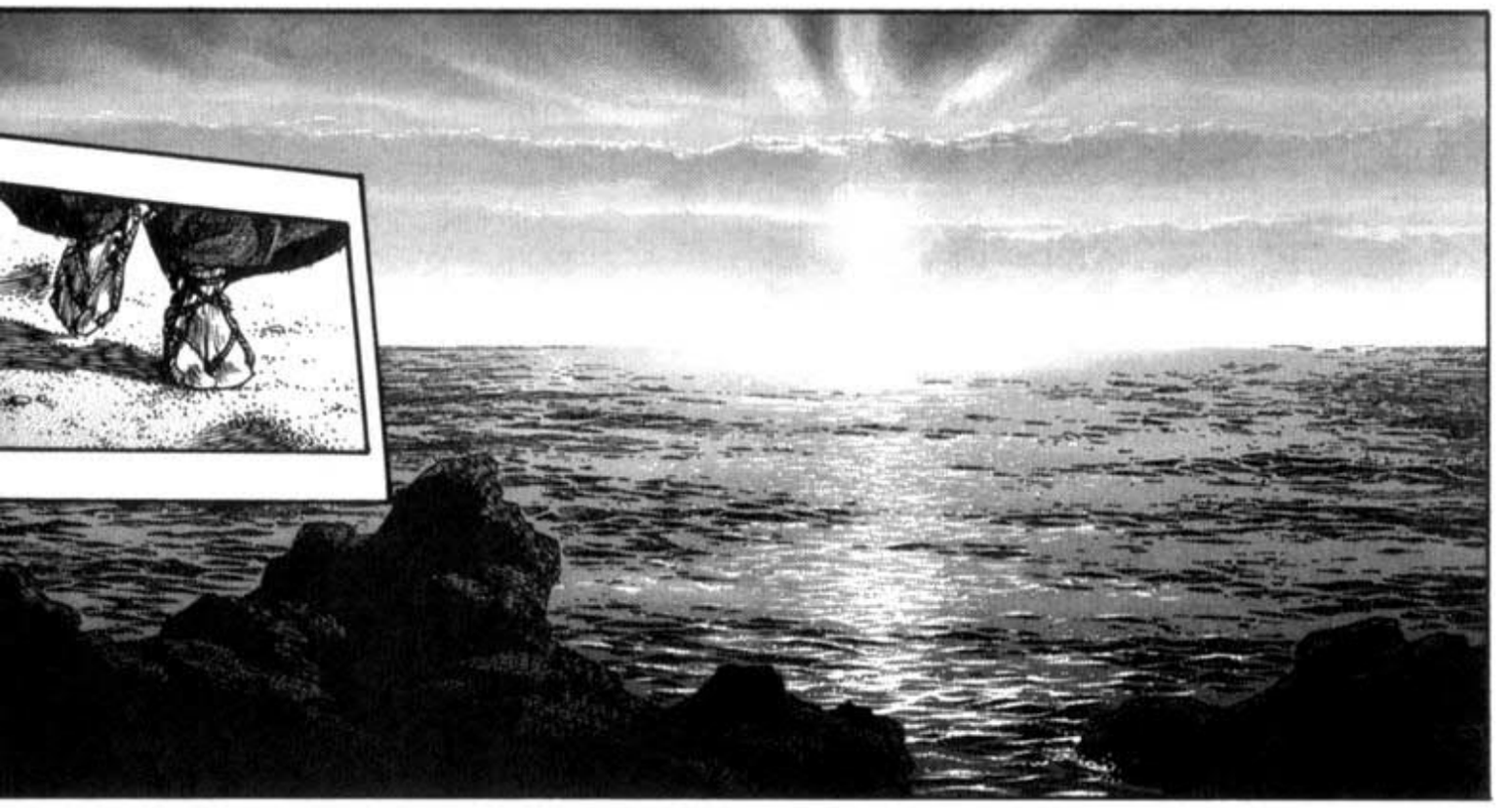
WHO IS THAT...?
FSSSHH
FSSSHH
AAHH...
UUH...
FSSSHH
FSSSHH

AHH...
THE SEA...
FSSSHH
THE WAVES COMING IN...
FSSSHH
...THE WAVES DRIFTING BACK OUT...
UHH...

!
HE'S SINGING THE SONG OF THE WAVES...

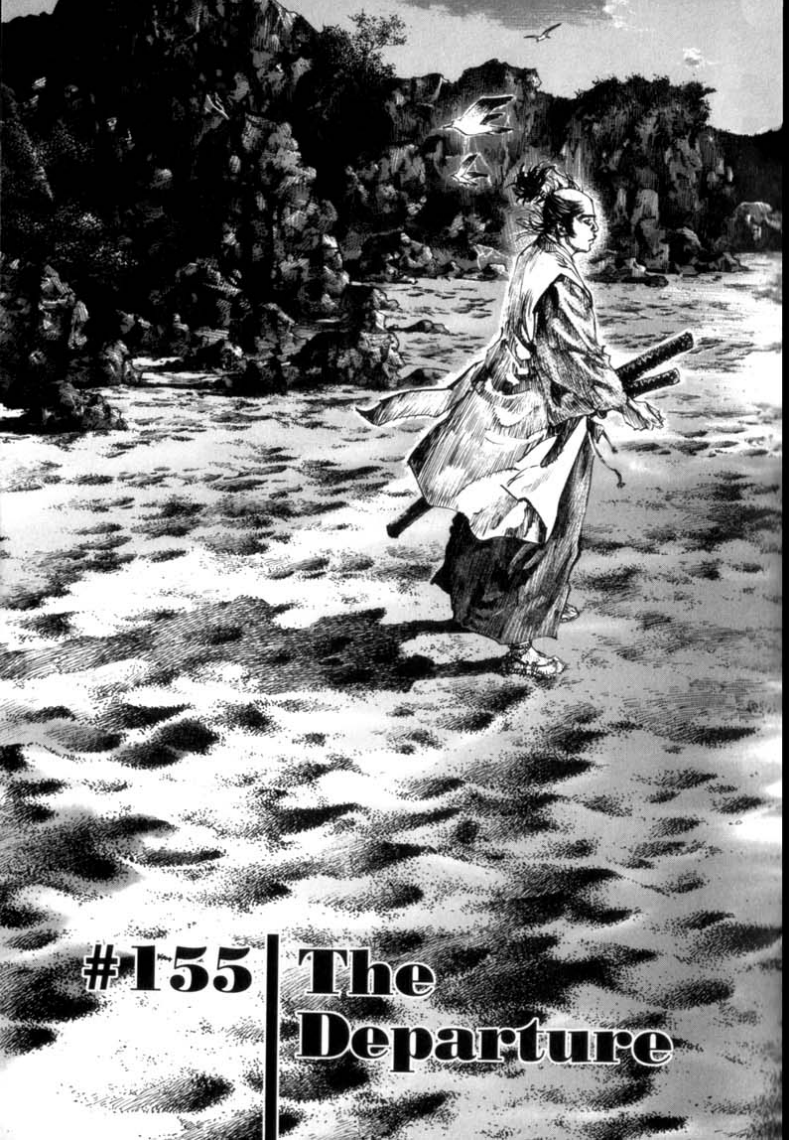
Vagabond





FSSSSHH

THWUP
PLISH
THWUP



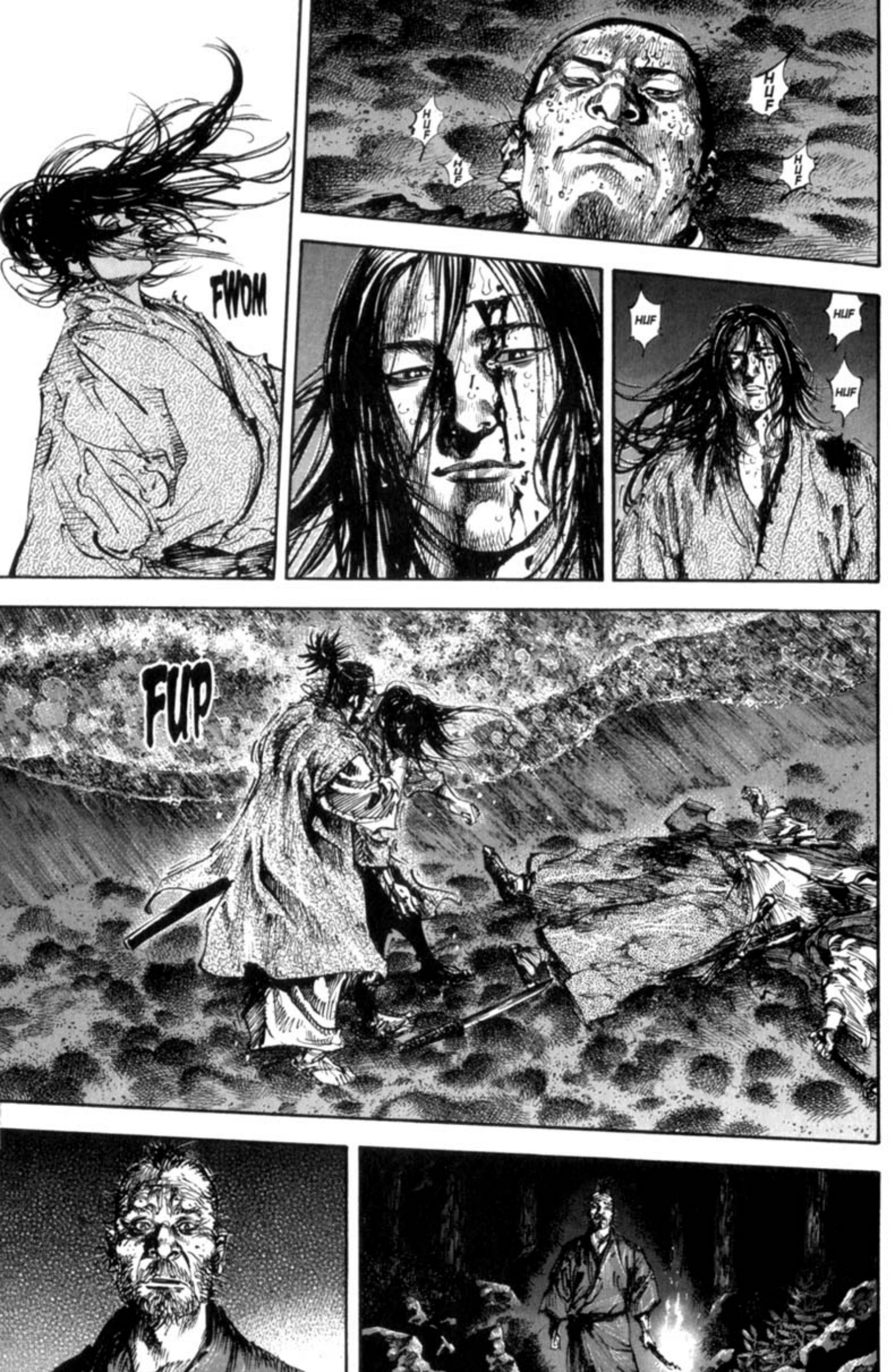
#155 The Departure

FSSSHH
FSSSHH

FSSSSHH

ŌYAMA
...
WERE WE BEING ARROGANT ...?

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF


HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
FWOM
HUF
HUF
HUF
FUP

THUP
MAGNIFICENT!
WE HAVE NO IDEA HOW VAST THE OCEAN IS.
WE ONLY KNOW IT'S BIG.
FUUUSHH

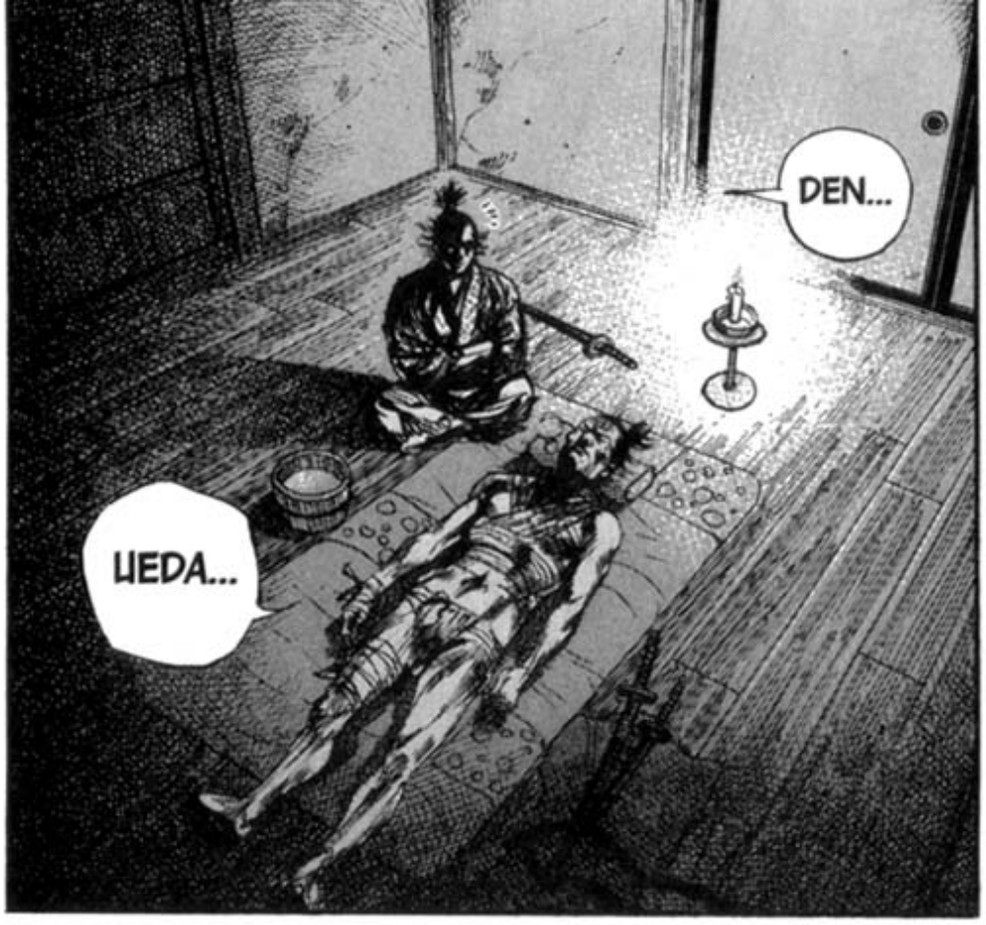
ITŌ ITTŌSAI...
...IS BIG.

FSSSHH
AND WHAT ABOUT KOJIRŌ...?

I SAID YOU COULD STAY THE NIGHT, BUT I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO RETURN LIKE THIS...!!
WE NEED MORE ALCOHOL!
WHAT-EVER YOU HAVE!!

Y-YES, SIR...

PLEASE...
...THIS IS TOO MUCH, SIR...


DEN...
UEDA...

.....
I HAD A DREAM...

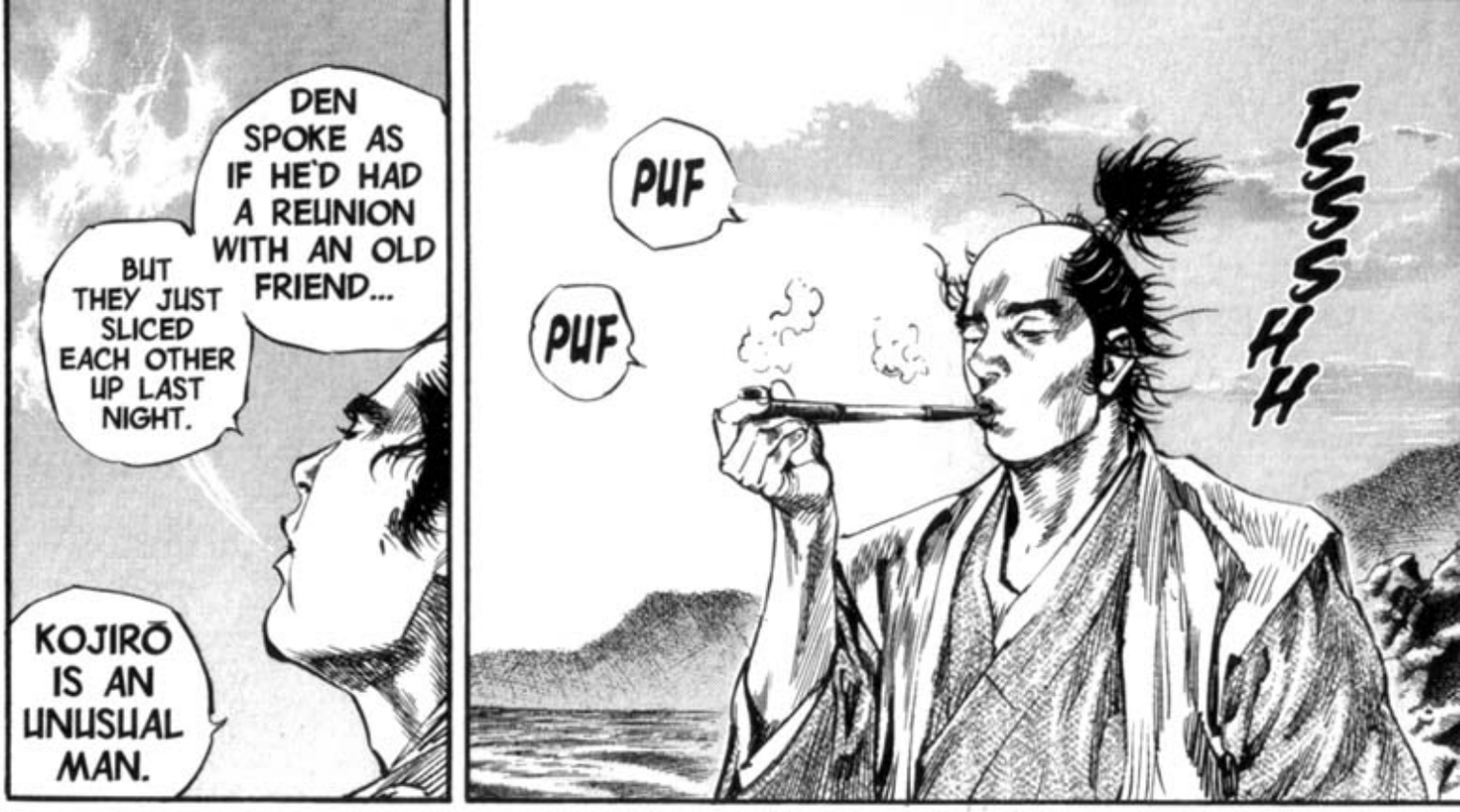
AND THE DESIRE TO BECOME STRONGER ...

WE BOTH HAD A LOVE FOR THE SWORD...

...HAD A DIS-CUSSION ...
TWO STRANGERS UNAWARE OF EACH OTHER'S BACK-GROUNDS.
YES, A DISCUS-SION...

WE BOTH WANTED TO BECOME...
...STRONGER AND STRONGER ...

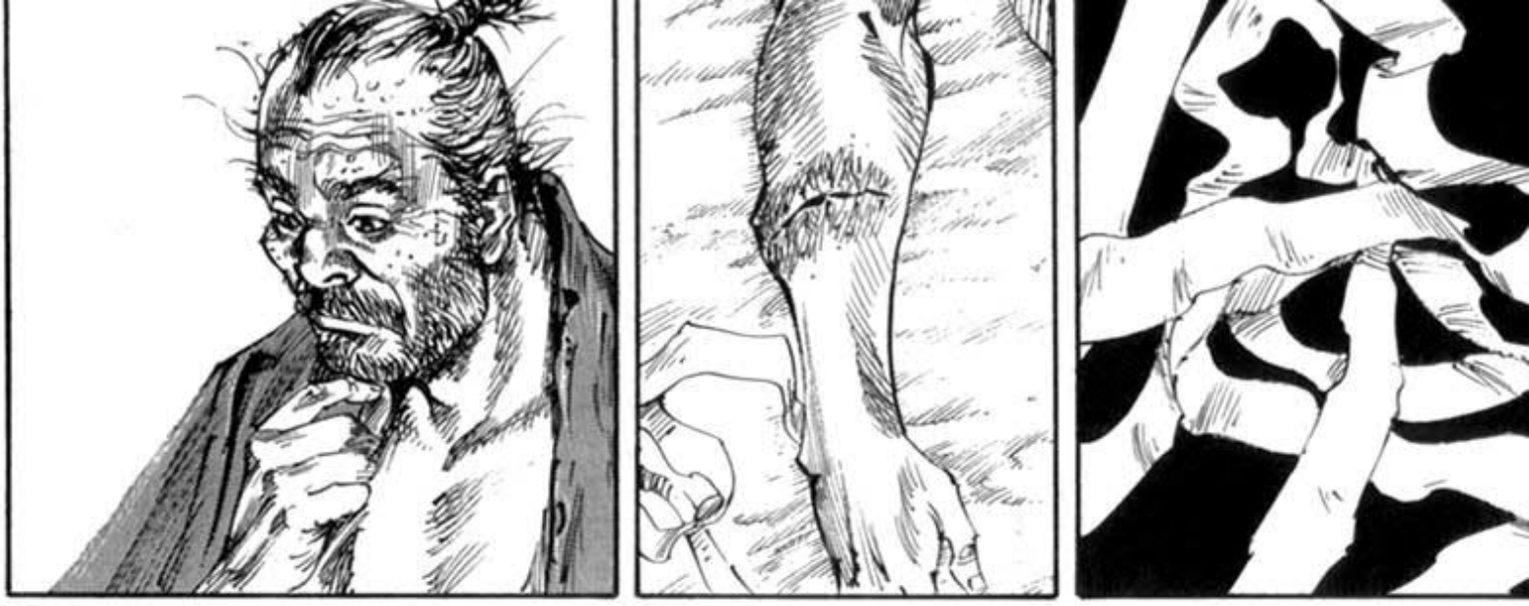
AND HE WAS SO EXCITED.
HIS PASSION WAS INFECTIOUS ...
WE PROMISED TO MEET EACH OTHER AGAIN.
.....
HE TALKED SO MUCH...
WHEN WE ARE BOTH STRONGER...
HUF
HUF

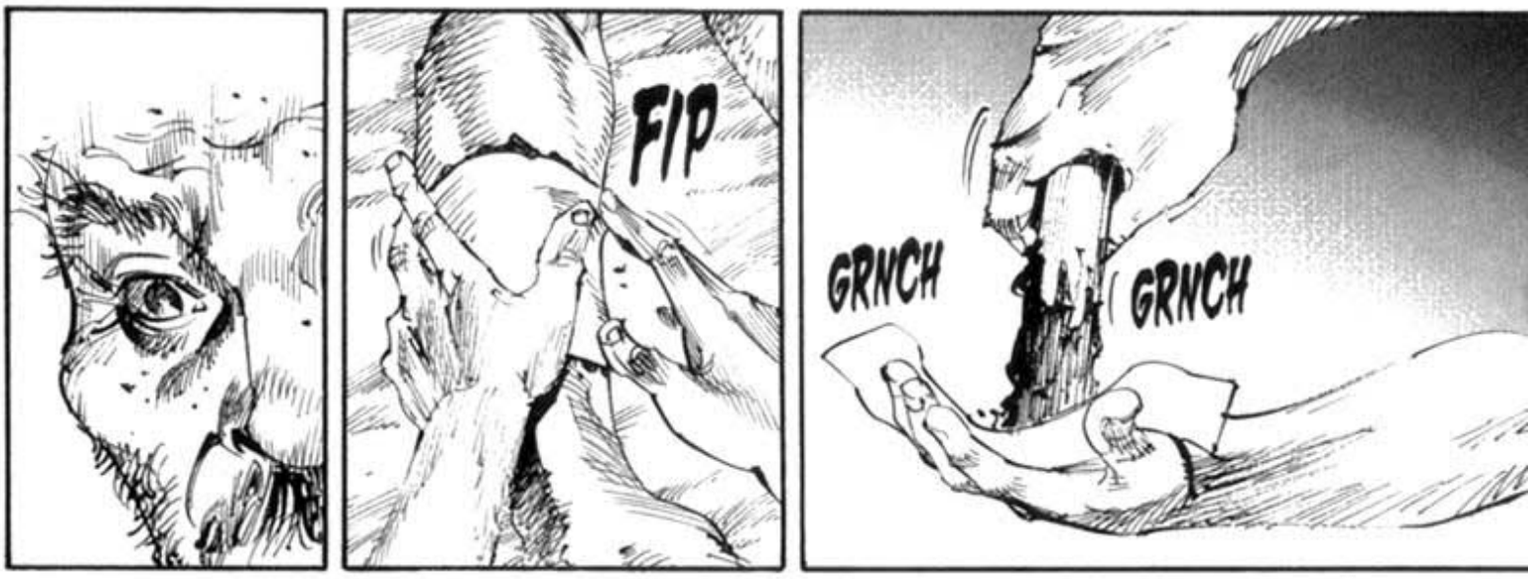

DEN SPOKE AS IF HE'D HAD A REUNION WITH AN OLD FRIEND...
BUT THEY JUST SLICED EACH OTHER UP LAST NIGHT.
KOJIRŌ IS AN UNUSUAL MAN.
PUF
PUF
FSSSHH

HIS POTENTIAL IS ALSO IMMEASURABLE.
KOJIRŌ...

PLEASE, MASTER KEMPŌ...
FSSSHH
WATCH HIM...
PLEASE WATCH OVER DENSHICHIRŌ ...

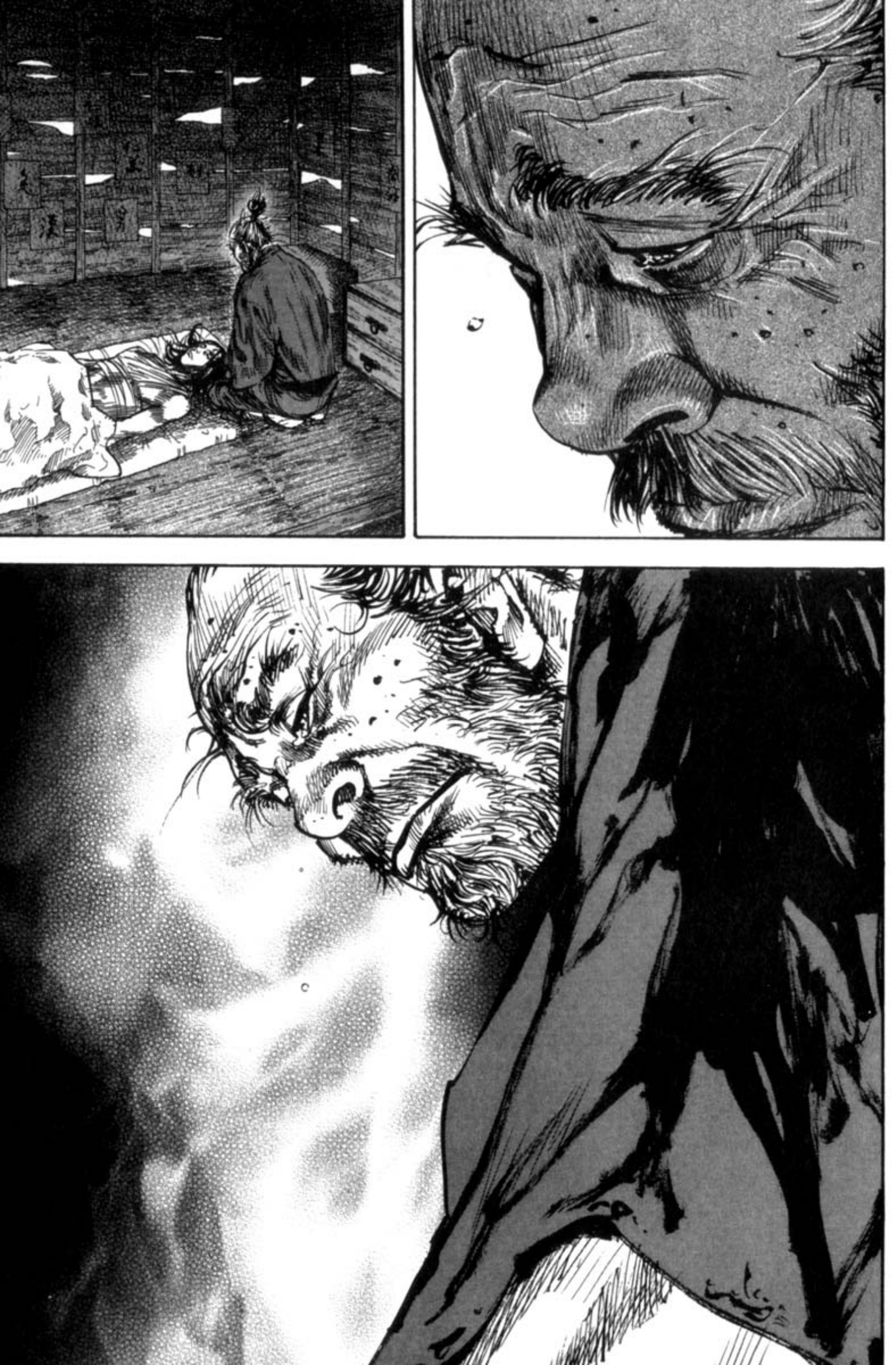
KRRCH
KRRCH
KRRCH
KRRCH
KRRCH
KRRCH
KRRCH
KRRCH




FIP
GRNCH
GRNCH

IT'S OKAY NOW.
IT MUST HAVE BEEN SCARY.
YOU MUST HAVE BEEN SO LONELY.

HUF HUF
I'LL PROTECT YOU!!
HUF
UNDER-STAND?
UUH!
AHH!!
UUHH!!



FICH

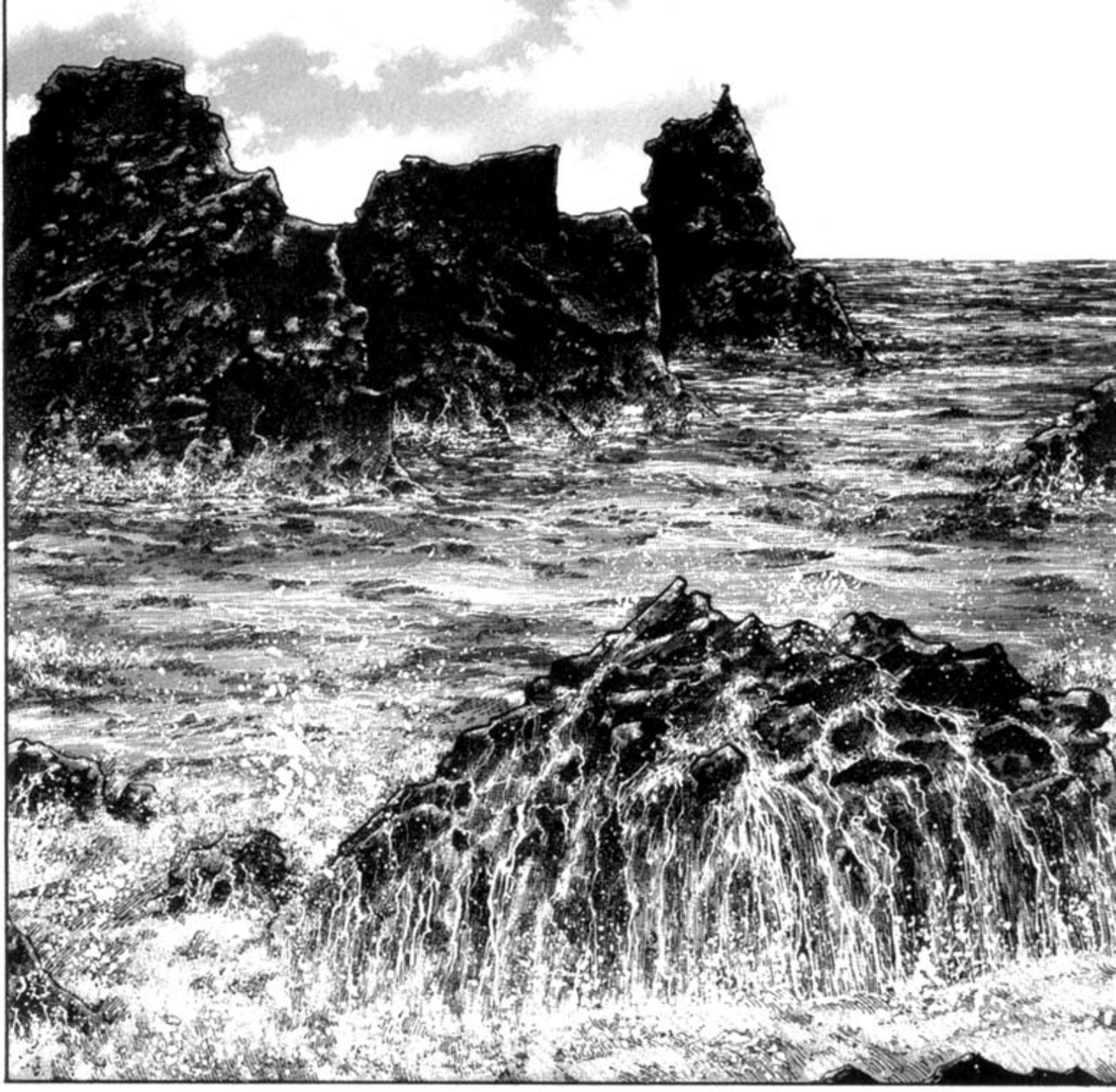
FICH
FICH

JII-AI...

HMM

Vagabond

#156 A Complete Life



HOW MANY DID HE CUT DOWN...?
THAT MANY...
.....
!!
ONE ...
TWO ...
THREE MEN.

I'VE GROWN OLD...

YAGORŌ ...
YOU CALLED ME A TIGER, TOO.

YOU'RE MY DISCIPLE ...
...BUT WHEN YOU CALLED ME A TIGER...
...I WAS A LITTLE FLAT-TERED.

"THIS ONE'S A TIGER."
"JUST LIKE US."

YOU DID.

THAT'S WHAT OLD AGE DOES TO YOU.
FZZ
YAGORŌ... IT'S YOUR FAULT, YOU BASTARD...
OVERNIGHT, HE'S BECOME A MAN...!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
IT WAS YOU THAT RAISED HIM, MASTER!!
IS THAT TRUE ...?
KOJIRŌ ...
EVERY MAN IS A VESSEL FULL OF POTENTIAL.
UTSUWA (VESSEL)
U-TSU-WA...
I CAN'T TELL...
...WHAT YOUR POTENTIAL IS ANYMORE.

I ONLY KNOW THAT YOU HAVE A VAST AMOUNT OF POTENTIAL...

FSSSHH

YAGORŌ ...

KOJIRŌ ...
IT'S TIME...
IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO LEAVE ME.

PLEASE LOOK AFTER KOJIRŌ...!!

FSSSHH

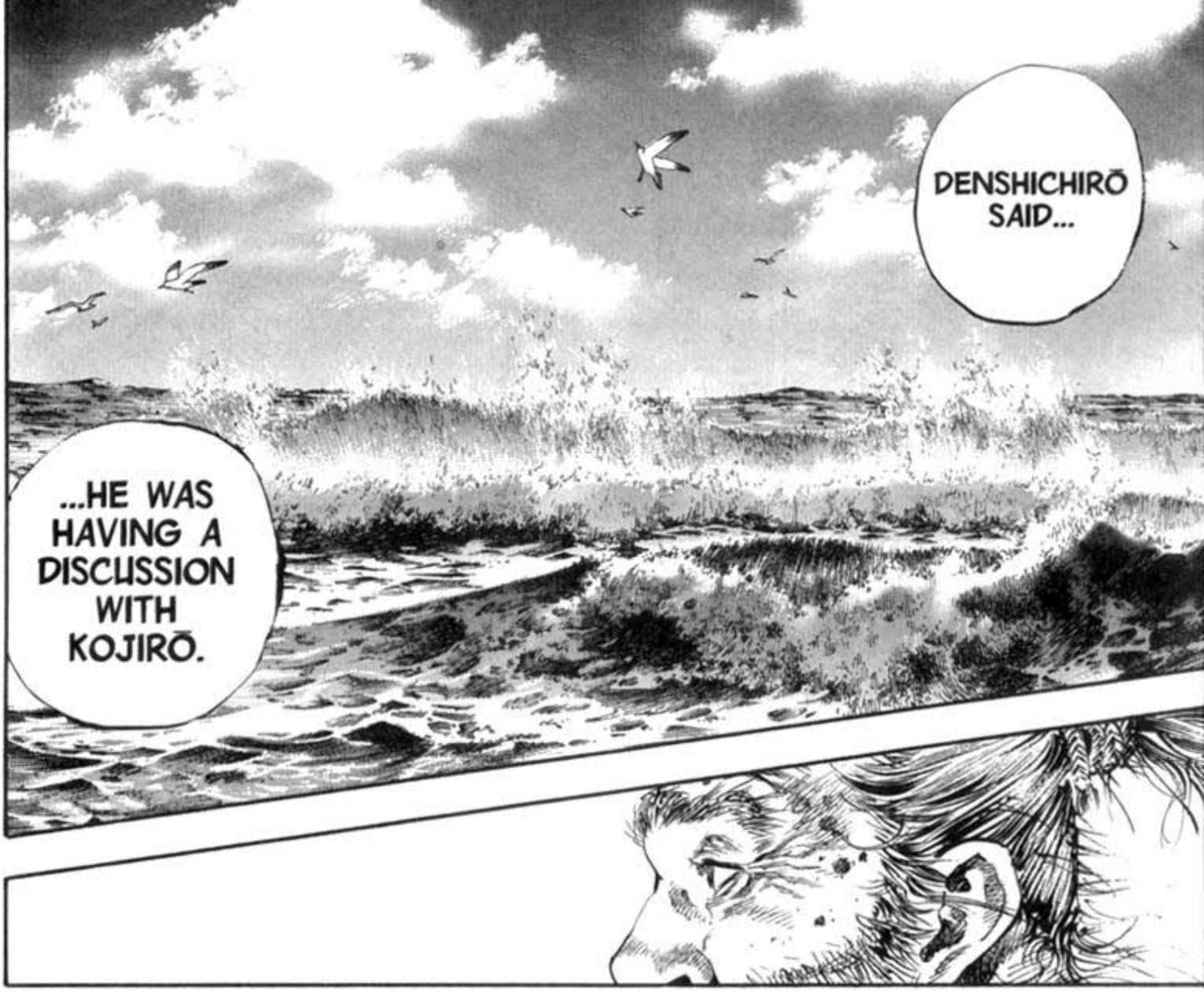
KOJIRŌ DECIDED FOR HIMSELF TO LEAVE WITH YAGORŌ.
I KNOW THIS...

...BECAUSE HE'S ALREADY FORGOTTEN ABOUT THIS SWORD.
A KEEPSAKE OF HIS PARENTS.
HE FOUND SOMETHING EQUAL TO THIS SWORD.
AND THAT'S YAGORŌ ...
ITŌ ITTŌSAI.
THE SWORD THAT HE CHERISHED SO.
HE DOESN'T NEED IT ANYMORE.

I CAN'T STOP CRYING.
FWSSHH
SPLSSH
FWSSHH

SO YOU'RE STILL AROUND.
WE'RE LEAVING TODAY, SIR.
MY COMPANION'S WOUNDS HAVE FINALLY HEALED.
HM?
THAT YOUNG MAN MANAGED TO SURVIVE...
HMM...
THE SWORD...
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE SWORD, MASTER KANEMAKI?

DON'T ASK SUCH QUESTIONS OF ME.
.....
THE SWORD ...
FSSSSHH
THAT NIGHT...
AND NOW I AM ONLY LEFT WITH REGRETS.
I GAVE MY LIFE...
...TO THE SWORD.


DENSHICHIRŌ SAID...
...HE WAS HAVING A DISCUSSION WITH KOJIRŌ.

ABOUT HOW THEY LOVED THE SWORD.
AND HOW THEY WANTED TO BECOME STRONGER.
THEY BOTH...

...HAD MUCH TO SAY TO EACH OTHER.
THE SWORD IS SO STRANGE.
IS THAT WHAT THEY FELT...
...AS THEY WERE TRYING TO KILL EACH OTHER?
THAT'S HOW I FELT TOO...

AHH
AHHH!
FSSSHH

TUNK
WUNK
I WON'T TEACH YOU.

THERE YOU ARE!
THUD
FWOOSH

THWAK
FWOOSH
AHH!
FSSSHH
I WON'T TEACH YOU THE SWORD!!

FSSSHH
A CLOSE FRIEND HE'S KNOWN FOR TEN YEARS.
...AS IF KOJIRŌ WERE AN OLD FRIEND...
DEN-SHICHIRŌ SPOKE FONDLY OF HIM...

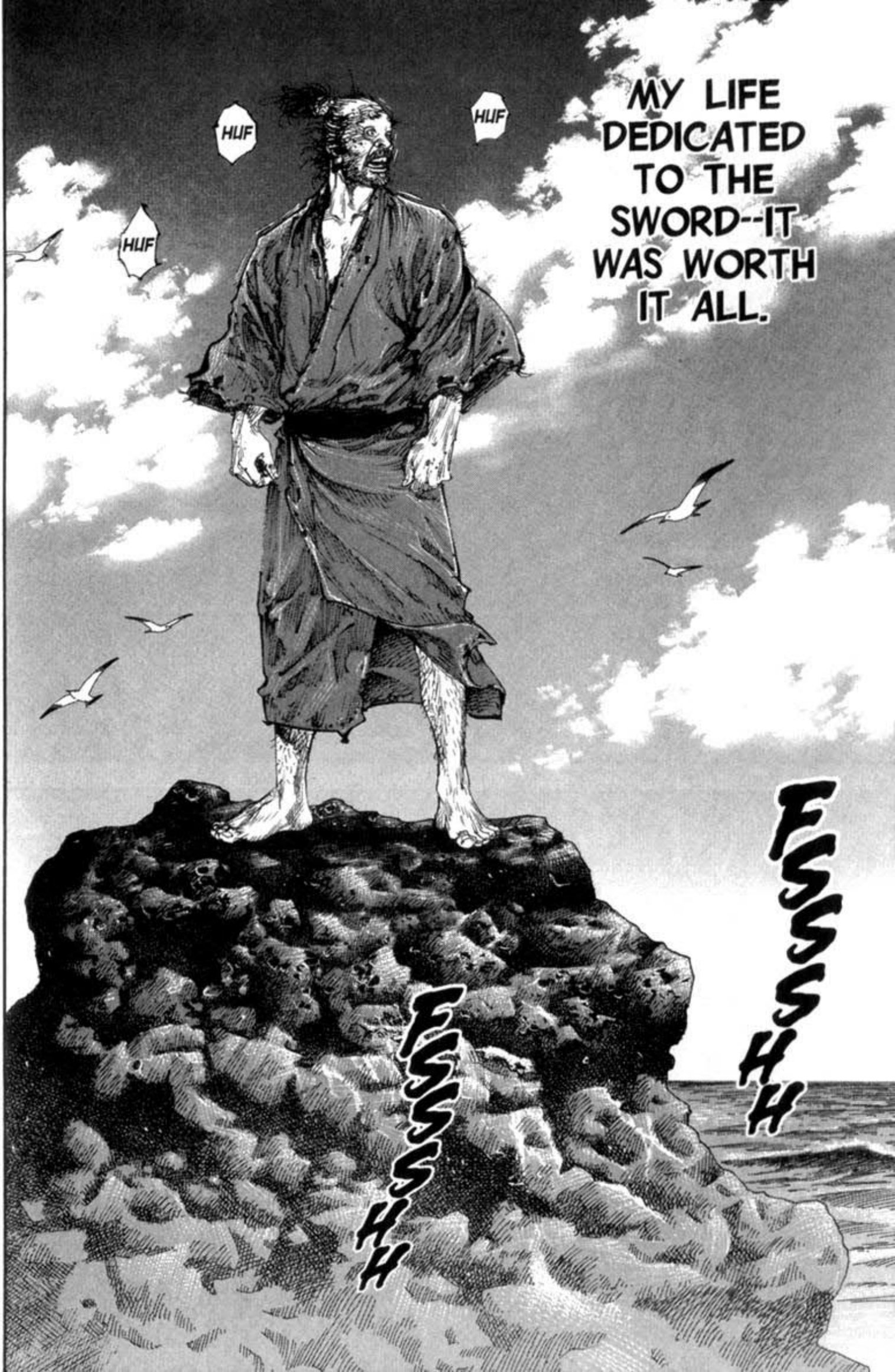
AN OLD FRIEND...

HMM?

TMP

THAT'S THE HIGHEST POINT AROUND HERE...
OVER THERE...

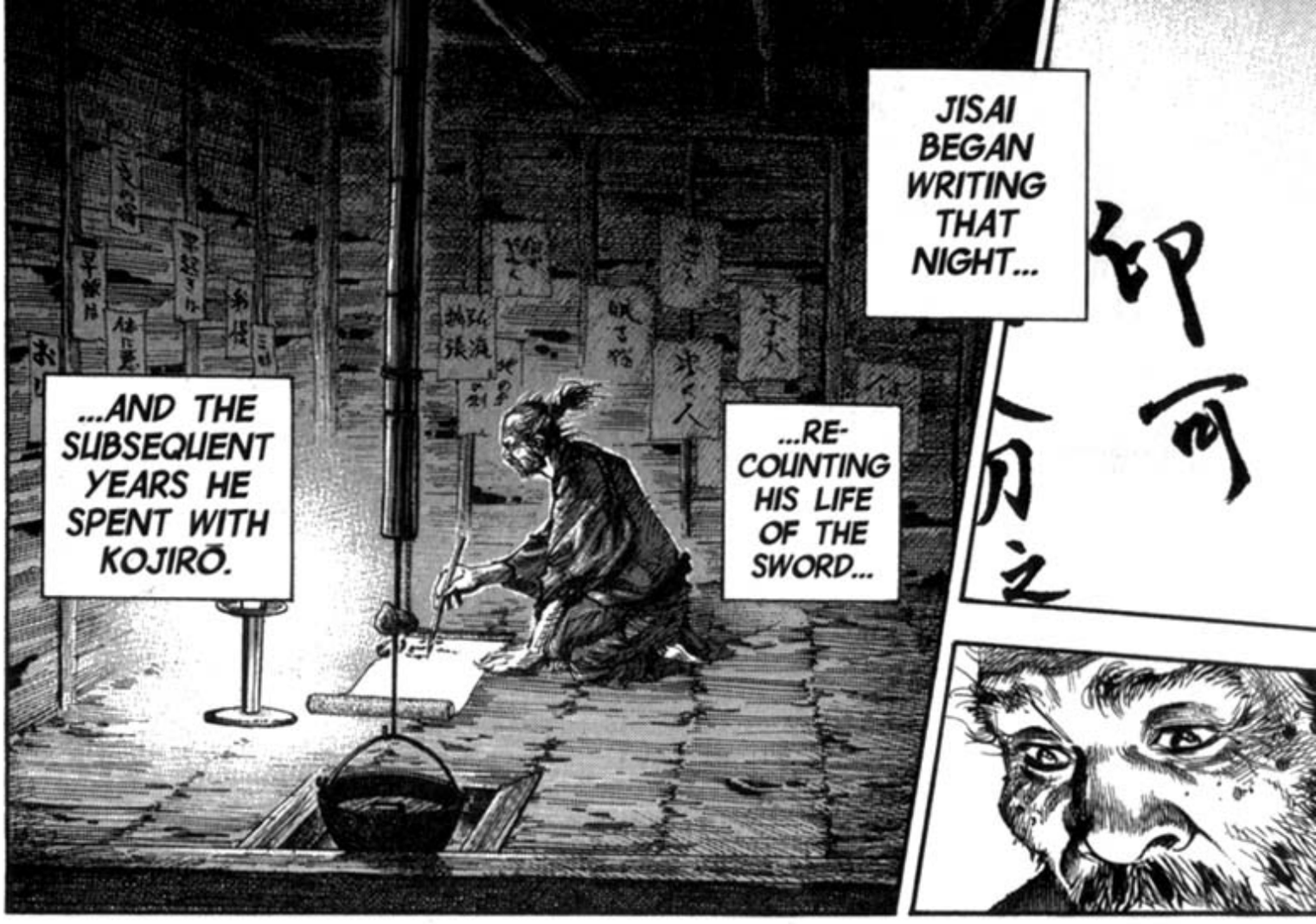
TUGG
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
FICH
KOJIRŌ...


HUF
HUF
HUF
MY LIFE DEDICATED TO THE SWORD--IT WAS WORTH IT ALL.
FSSSSHH
FSSSSHH

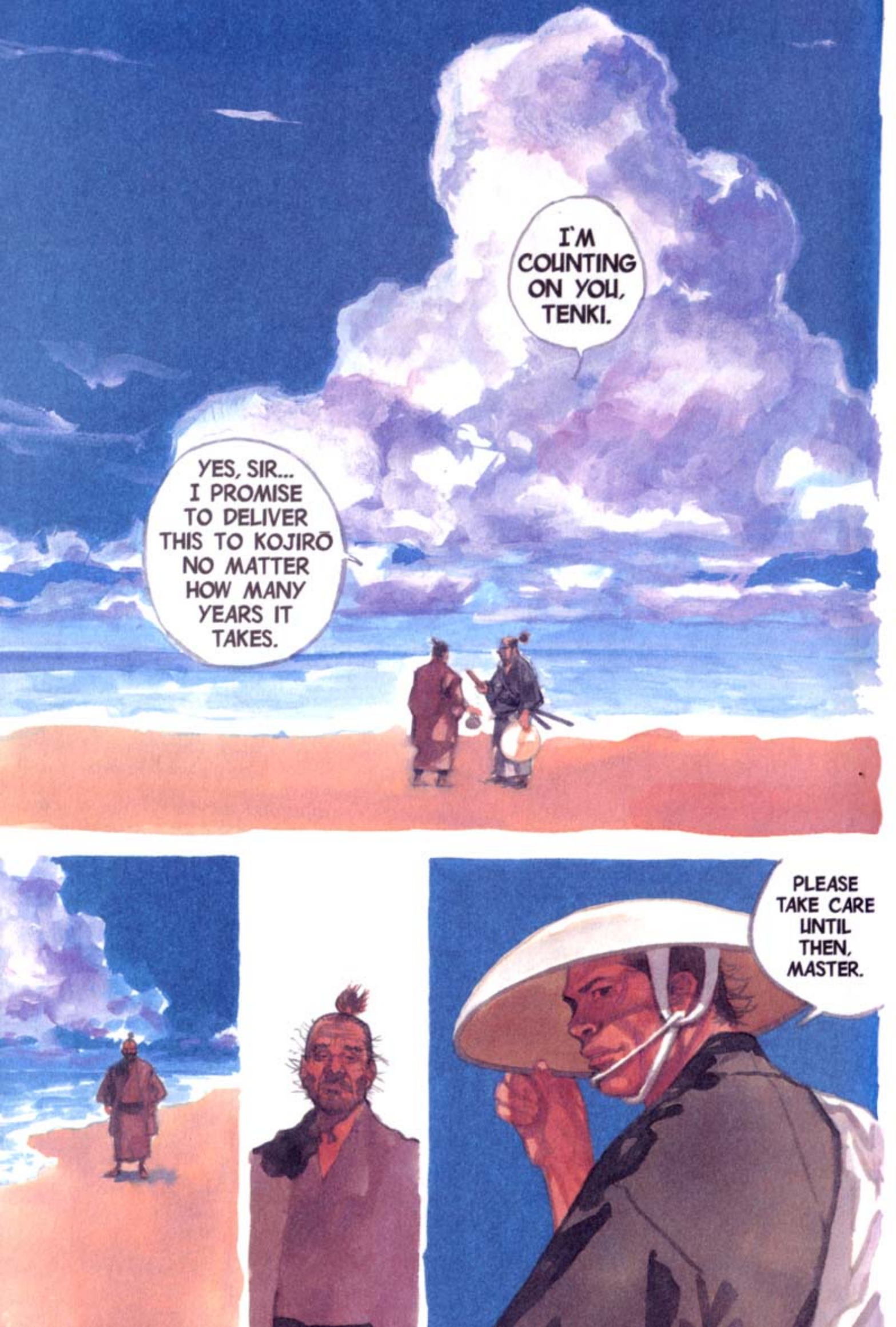
HAH HA!

IT WAS WORTH IT BECAUSE I MANAGED TO LEAVE BEHIND A GREAT SWORDSMAN LIKE YOU...

FSSSHH

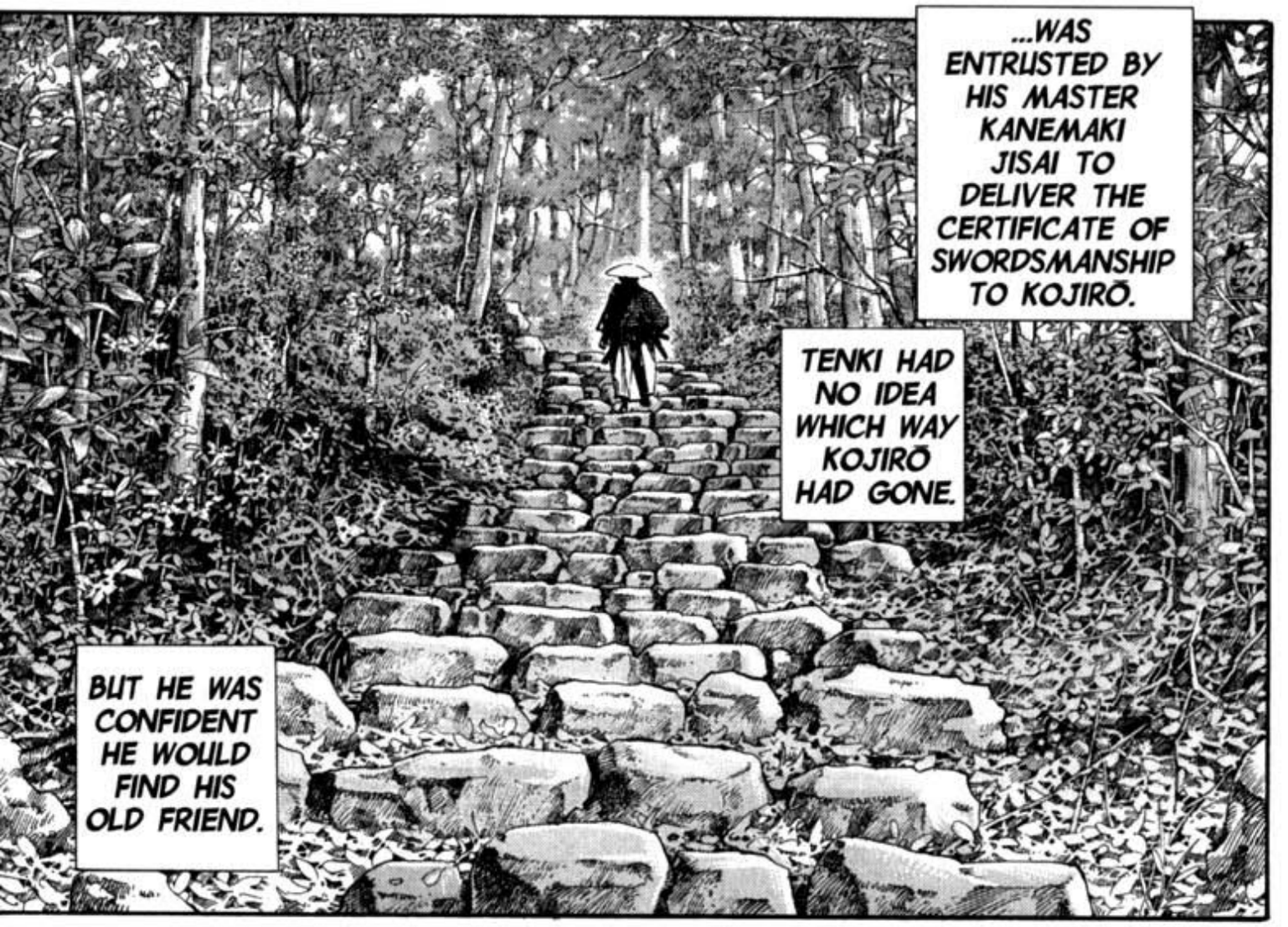

JISAI BEGAN WRITING THAT NIGHT...
...RE-COUNTING HIS LIFE OF THE SWORD...
...AND THE SUBSEQUENT YEARS HE SPENT WITH KOJIRŌ.

I THANK YOU, LORD.


I'M COUNTING ON YOU, TENKI.
YES, SIR... I PROMISE TO DELIVER THIS TO KOJIRŌ NO MATTER HOW MANY YEARS IT TAKES.
PLEASE TAKE CARE UNTIL THEN, MASTER.

#157 Ganryū

KOJIRŌ'S FRIEND KUSANAGI TENKI...
...FORMERLY KNOWN AS KAMEKICHI...


...WAS ENTRUSTED BY HIS MASTER KANEMAKI JISAI TO DELIVER THE CERTIFICATE OF SWORDSMANSHIP TO KOJIRŌ.
TENKI HAD NO IDEA WHICH WAY KOJIRŌ HAD GONE.
BUT HE WAS CONFIDENT HE WOULD FIND HIS OLD FRIEND.

...I'M SURE I WILL HEAR WORD OF SASAKI KOJIRŌ.
IF I JUST CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THE WAY OF THE SWORD...

TODAY I SET OUT ON THE WARRIOR'S PILGRIM-AGE.

SASAKI KOJIRŌ!! YOU'LL MAKE A NAME FOR YOURSELF!
NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE I'M SURE I'LL HEAR ABOUT YOU...

FSSSHH

RRIP
RRIP
RRIP
FSSSHH
FSSSHH
FSSSHH

休20

KACHING

KACHING

GOT TO RELIEVE MYSELF...

HEY, PAGEBOY.
HAND OVER THAT BAG.
IT MAKES A NICE WEIGHTY SOUND.

FSSH
HURRY UP!!
OR ELSE ...

WHUD
FWISSH
ARRGH!

!!
WHAT?! HE GOT MY SWORD...
YOU BASTARD ...

WHAT'S THIS?!
HUH ...?
.....
HEY THERE ...
YOUR EYES ARE SO BEAUTIFUL ...
HAH ...
YOUR EYES ARE TOO INNOCENT ...
...TO HAVE KILLED ANYONE.

OF COURSE, I DON'T WANT TO KILL SOMEONE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY.
SO PUT THE MONEY DOWN AND LEAVE.
THEN I WON'T HAVE TO USE MY SWORD.
I'LL GIVE YOU FIVE SECONDS.
PUT IT DOWN RIGHT HERE.
ONE...
TP TP

TWO
...
TMP
WHAT THE--?!

I SUR-
RENDER
!!

COULD IT BE HIS EYES ARE MORE DEVELOPED TO COMPENSATE FOR HIS HEARING?
FIP
FICK
I-I SURRENDER.
THIS IS MERE CHILD'S PLAY FOR HIM.
COME ON.
WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
SO YOUNG, BUT SO FORMIDABLE.

WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
SURNAME, SASAKI! FIRST NAME, KOJIRŌ!!
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "CRAZY TIGER FROM ECHIZEN"!!
HA HA HA HA!!
DO I HAVE TO ANSWER FOR HIM EVERY TIME?
WHAT A BOTHER.
TUMP
TUMP
COME HERE, KOJIRŌ.
I'VE GOT AN IDEA.

LET'S ESCAPE WHILE WE CAN.
RIGHT.
休め
THAT SUITS US FINE.
WILL THIS DO?
FWIP

THERE.

INVINCIBLE SWORDSMAN UNDER THE HEAVENS SASAKI KOJIRŌ

I NEED A BANNER POLE.
HM? OH...YES, A POLE.
YOU MAY BE AS SILENT AS A ROCK.
BUT YOU'LL HAVE NO SHORTAGE OF CHALLENGERS WHILE YOU'RE HOLDING THIS!!
"GAN" IS ANOTHER READING OF ROCK...
SHALL WE CALL YOUR STYLE "GANRYŪ"?
GANRYŪ ...
.....
THIS LOOKS MORE FORMIDABLE. GOOD.
WILL THIS DO, SIR?
SEW THIS ON TO THAT.
HMM? ME, SIR?

WHAT IS THAT?
DON'T LAUGH. YOU'LL BE KILLED.
HE DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A SWORD.
"INVINCIBLE SWORDSMAN UNDER THE HEAVENS" ...?
BUT HE'S GOT SUCH A GENTLE FACE...
MUTTER MUTTER ...
MUTTER
MUTTER
INVINCIBLE SWORDSMAN UNDER THE HEAVENS GANRYŪ SASAKI KOJIRŌ
.....
HM?
HEY, KOJIRŌ, LOOK OVER THERE!!
MUTTER
MUTTER

HAH
無双剣
SLICE

HA HA
HA HA
HEY, "NUMBER ONE MARTIAL ARTIST UNDER THE HEAVENS!!"
WHAT'S THAT...?!

MEET "INVINCIBLE SWORDSMAN UNDER THE HEAVENS" RIGHT HERE!

AHH...
剣
FWP
FWP
FWP

About the Author

VAGABOND was created by Takehiko Inoue, author of the best-selling manga *SLAM DUNK*, with over 100 million copies in print worldwide. Inoue received the 2000 Media Arts award for Manga from the Japanese Ministry of Culture as well as the 2000 Kodansha Award for best manga for his work on *VAGABOND*. In 2002, *VAGABOND* received the prestigious Tezuka award for best manga. Most recently, Inoue has been nominated for a 2004 Eisner Award for best writer/artist. To date *VAGABOND* has sold over 22 million copies throughout the world. In addition to his numerous manga titles, Inoue also created the character designs for the PlayStation basketball game, *ONE ON ONE*.

About *VAGABOND* and Miyamoto Musashi

Takehiko Inoue's *VAGABOND*, based on Eiji Yoshikawa's novel *MUSASHI*, is a fictional account of the life of Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645). The historical figure Miyamoto Musashi, author of the philosophical strategy guide *A BOOK OF FIVE RINGS*, was a master of the sword and was revered as a "sword-saint." He founded the Niten Ichi style of sword fighting, which is typified by fighting with both long and short swords at once—holding the long sword with the right hand and the short sword with the left. Musashi was also a master of the "gentler arts"—he was a master of *sumi-e* (black ink drawings), metalworking, and woodcarving. The films that comprise *THE SAMURAI TRILOGY* directed by Hiroshi Inagaki and starring Toshiro Mifune, were also based on Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*. Inspired by the huge success of *VAGABOND* in Japan, in 2003 NHK produced the historical period drama *MUSASHI*. Also based on Yoshikawa's novel, this drama stars kabuki actor Shinnosuke Ichikawa as Musashi and TV star Ryoko Yonekura as Otsu.

A note on names:

The names presented within the context of this comic are presented in the traditional Japanese order—surname followed by first name. "Miyamoto" is Miyamoto Musashi's last name and "Musashi" is his first name. The name of the creator of *VAGABOND*, however, has been presented first name first, last name second. "Takehiko" is the author's first name and "Inoue" is his last name.

Glossary and Extraneous Background Information

Kaga
Located in present day Ishikawa Prefecture.

Echizen
Located in the northern part of present day Fukui Prefecture.

Ito Ittosai (Dates unknown)
Founder of the Itto-ryu school of sword fighting. Before establishing his own style, Ittosai is said to have studied a variant of the Chujo-ryu style of sword fighting under Kanemaki Jisai's instruction.

Sasaki Kojiro
The legendary archrival of Miyamoto Musashi. Kojiro is believed to have studied the Chujo-ryu style of swordsmanship under the instruction of either Toda Seigen or Kanemaki Jisai. Kojiro was renowned for his *Tubame-gaeshi*, or "swallow-cut" technique which was inspired by the movement of a swallow in flight.

The Sengoku Period and the Battle of Sekigahara
The Warring States or *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) in Japan was a time of chaos and conflict. Central authorities, in the form of the imperial court and the shogunate, had grown increasingly weaker and the land was effectively ruled autonomously by numerous *daimyo* (domainal lords). Looking to expand their spheres of control, the *daimyo* were constantly at war with each other. One *daimyo* in particular, Oda Nobunaga, set out on a mission to unify Japan by means of conquest. Incredibly successful, by the time of his assassination in 1582, he managed to control approximately one-third of all of Japan. One of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, became Nobunaga's successor to carry on the quest for unification. Through a process of conquest and conciliation, Hideyoshi succeeded in creating an orderly federation amongst the *daimyo*, and by 1590, order was restored to Japan under Hideyoshi's rule. Hideyoshi's death in 1598, however, presented the question of succession. Most of the *daimyo* from the domains in the west remained loyal to the Toyotomi Clan and its five-year-old heir, Toyotomi Hideyori. Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, leading the major *daimyo* from central and eastern Japan, challenged the Toyotomi clan's leadership. The two sides clashed at the Battle of Sekigahara (1600) in Mino (located in present day Gifu Prefecture) where the Tokugawa claimed an overwhelming victory. From that point on, the Tokugawa clan would effectively rule Japan for the next 250 years.

Takuan Soho (1573-1645)
A monk of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, by the time Takuan was 37, he was appointed abbot of the leading temple of the Rinzai sect, Daitokuji. Takuan was an important figure whose acute and brutally honest advice was sought by influential and powerful figures such as Emperor Go Mizuno and the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu. His correspondence to Yagyu Munenori discussing Zen and swordsmanship entitled *THE UNFETTERED MIND* has become an influential treatise in both the areas of philosophy and martial arts. The pickled daikon radish, *takuan*, also bears his name.

The Yagyu Clan
Yagyu Muneyoshi Sekishusai (1527-1606) was the founder of the famed Yagyu-Shinkage school of sword fighting. His son Yagyu Munenori (1571-1646) was one of Tokugawa's key generals at the Battle of Sekigahara. Munenori was appointed as the official fencing instructor of the Tokugawa Clan, and in 1632 the Yagyu were appointed as the *ometsuke*—responsible for the surveillance of the *daimyo*. Although the Yagyu clan has been depicted in Kazuo Koike's *LONE WOLF AND CUB* as the plotters of the downfall of Itto Ogami, the general Japanese popular culture take on the Yagyu Clan is more positive. More specifically, Munenori's son, Yagyu Jubei (1607-1650), is viewed as a wandering hero protecting the people from evildoers.

Yoshioka Kempo (dates unknown)
A distinguished warrior during the *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) and the founder of the renowned Yoshioka school of sword fighting. Yoshioka Kempo mastered the Kyohachi style of swordmanship and then modified it to form the Yoshioka style. In the context of Inoue's *VAGABOND*, as well as in Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*, Yoshioka Seijuro and Denshichiro are Kempo's sons who are historically thought to have dueled with Miyamoto Musashi on numerous occasions.

editor's choice

VIZ Graphic Novel

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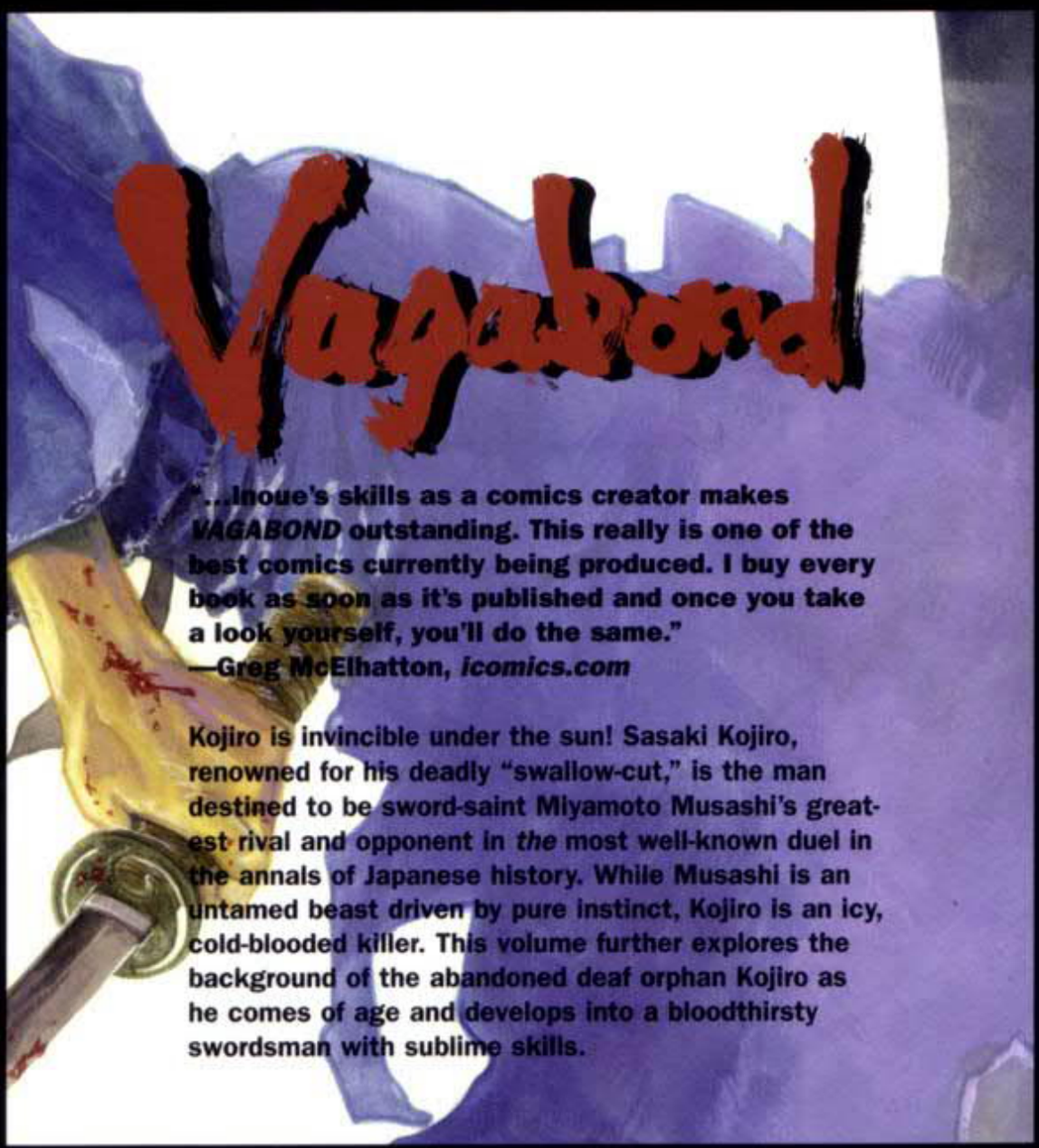

"...Inoue's skills as a comics creator makes *VAGABOND* outstanding. This really is one of the best comics currently being produced. I buy every book as soon as it's published and once you take a look yourself, you'll do the same."
—Greg McElhatton, *icomics.com*

Kojiro is invincible under the sun! Sasaki Kojiro, renowned for his deadly "swallow-cut," is the man destined to be sword-saint Miyamoto Musashi's greatest rival and opponent in *the* most well-known duel in the annals of Japanese history. While Musashi is an untamed beast driven by pure instinct, Kojiro is an icy, cold-blooded killer. This volume further explores the background of the abandoned deaf orphan Kojiro as he comes of age and develops into a bloodthirsty swordsman with sublime skills.

VIZ

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